

St Alban's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 139959
Inspection date 04/11/2009
Inspector June Fielden

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

St Albans Pre-School is one of three privately owned pre-schools. It opened in 1992 and operates from two halls at St Albans Church Hall. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is located in a residential area of Sutton. The setting is open from 9.00 am to 12.00 pm on Monday and Fridays, and from 9.00 am to 2.45 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during term time, and from 9.00 am to 12.00 pm during part of the school summer holidays.

A maximum of 26 children from two years to the end of the early years age range may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 70 children in the early years age group on roll. The pre-school is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff, five of whom hold early years qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification at Level 2. The setting provides funded early education for three-and-four-year-olds.

The holiday club was not inspected, as it was not operating at the time of the inspection.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The pre-school has an effective leadership that has a clear vision for the future. Staff provide an inclusive environment for children where their welfare and learning needs are well met. They have a successful partnership with parents and work well with others involved in children's care. Through self-evaluation the pre-school recognises its strengths and areas for further development. There is a breach of a specific welfare requirement relating to documentation, but this does not have a significant impact on the provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that the risk assessment clearly states when it was carried out, by whom, the date of the review and any action taken following a review (Documentation) 30/11/2009

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that appropriate hand washing routines are in place, to maintain children's good health

- ensure that the gaps at the back of the flower beds in the garden and children's access to the hallway from the main hall are included in the risk assessment, to maintain their safety.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Designated staff at the pre-school fully understand their responsibilities to safeguard children's welfare. The group's range of policies and procedures are understood by staff and parents, and the group work with relevant agencies to protect children from harm. The same policies and procedures also apply to the holiday sessions. There are clear vetting procedures to ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Although staff do not currently record their reviews of the risk assessment in the manner required by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), daily safety checks of the premises and the garden area are made, so this has minimal impact on children's welfare. It is currently possible for children to access the back of the flowerbeds in the garden, where there is a slight drop, and the hallway leading to the kitchen and the smaller hall used by the setting, but these areas are well monitored by staff.

The pre-school has a wide range of toys and equipment which are accessible to children. Space is well used, and activities are set up in a manner which allows children to move around freely in the hall and garden, selecting resources for themselves. Efficient recruitment and induction procedures are in place, and regular staff appraisals provide them with a chance to offer their opinions on the setting. Staff work together well as a team, and are provided with effective opportunities to continue their professional development by attending training. They let children experience growing plants for food, and harvesting and eating what they produce. Children from a range of different cultures attend the setting, including some who speak English as an additional language. In these cases staff attempt to learn a few key words in the children's first language and use staff or other parents to assist in translating for them. This enables staff to reassure these children at the start of the sessions. Staff teach children how people from other nationalities celebrate their special occasions. Parents are welcome to talk to the group and bring in artefacts connected with their culture to share with the children. Staff have successfully addressed all of the recommendations made at the pre-school's last inspection, including obtaining resources to promote positive images of disability. The pre-school identifies some of their key strengths as the way in which they use the information they regularly obtain from parents on children's interests. Also the way in which they use circle time and snack time to enable children to socialise and take part in group discussions.

Parents are pleased with the care provided for their children and believe that they receive good feedback from staff about their child's progress. They are kept well informed about the setting, as there are several notice boards which provide them with details of the weekly routines and planning, staff positions at the setting and information about staff that speak other languages. A whiteboard placed at the entrance to the setting is used to update parents on a daily basis with current news about what is happening at the pre-school. Parents are asked to complete

questionnaires, to enable staff to act on their ideas and opinions. Their child's development records are available to them on request, and they know that they can make an appointment to speak to their child's key person at any time. Staff work effectively with other providers who care for children that attend the pre-school. When children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are on roll, staff work in cooperation with other professionals involved in their care and follow any advice they are given. The pre-school also helps to prepare children for their transition to school, and teachers from the local schools are welcome to visit the setting and meet those who will be transferring to their care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are offered a wide range of activities which cover all areas of learning and provide a good balance of adult led and child initiated tasks. Staff obtain effective information from parents about children's starting points on the child profile form they complete when their child first attends the setting. They also use their regular observations to assist them in assessing and identifying children's next steps in learning, which are included in the weekly planning. Staff also plan activities for children attending the holiday sessions at the pre-school. These also cover all areas of learning, but include more art and craft activities, providing a holiday atmosphere for the children. Most of the time children are at the setting they are able to move freely between the main hall and the well planned garden area. This has recently been redeveloped, following the group's success in obtaining a grant for this work. The garden now includes a soft surface area where children exercise, using the larger equipment the group provides for them, such as the range of sit and ride vehicles. Children develop their independence by deciding when they want to have their snack, and by assisting staff with the tidying up. They play with the dressing-up clothes, developing their understanding of the differences in the way in which people from other cultures dress. Children participate in whole group activities, where staff develop their thinking skills by asking them questions, and provide them with opportunities to enable them to speak in front of others. They play with shredded paper in a large tray in the outdoor area, and laugh and giggle as they throw it up into the air and observe how it drops down around them and gets in their hair. Some children develop the activity further for themselves by collecting toy animals from the hall to use in the tray with the paper.

Children happily engage staff in conversation and are relaxed in their presence. Staff raise their awareness about road safety and how to keep themselves safe in general. Many efficient measures are in place to ensure children's welfare, such as the system that is used when someone other than a child's parents collects them from the setting. Staff also hold regular fire drills to enable children to practise the procedure they will follow in the case of an emergency. During circle time activities, staff effectively develop children's knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy and follow good hygiene practices. Children know that they should wash their hands after using the toilet and before they eat. They also wipe their nose when necessary, putting dirty tissues in the bin; although, children sometimes use a bowl of water in the main hall when washing their hands, instead of the wash basins in the toilet area. Children are offered nutritional snacks, and they can

choose from a selection of different types of fruit. Parents of children who stay for lunch are provided with information to remind them to include healthy contents in their child's lunch box. Children generally cooperate well with each other and resolve minor conflicts for themselves. They respond well to the expectations of staff, as they praise them and provide them with opportunities to take on responsibilities for themselves. There is a laptop, camera and walkie-talkies available to raise children's understanding of information technology, and equipment such as sand timers and torches to enable them to be inquisitive and to encourage their investigative skills.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met