

Little Robins Pre-School

Alban City School, 7 Hatfield Road, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL1 3RR

Inspection date	20/01/2014
Previous inspection date	Not Applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		1
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		1
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- Staff have a superb understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They precisely observe and assess children, identifying their preferred style of learning and their current interests and use this skilfully to provide a fantastic range of activities that fully engage and stimulate them.
- Parents are considered equal partners in their children's learning and their views are deemed important. Innovative ideas are offered to ensure they are included in their child's pre-school experience and offers children consistency between the home and pre-school learning environment.
- The manager and staff's realistic evaluation system and highly effective monitoring ensure targets for future development are identified and continuous improvements are made. This ensures the pre-school continues to provide superb quality care for all the children.
- The inspirational manager of the nursery motivates staff and together they provide children with a dynamic, stimulating and memorable early years experience.
- Children are well protected because staff have an excellent understanding of how to keep them safe. The comprehensive policies and procedures are up to date and in line with those of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's play and staff's interaction with them and invited the manager to conduct a joint observation.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including policies, procedures, children's records and planning.
- The inspector talked with the manager, staff and children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Full report

Information about the setting

Little Robins Pre-School registered in 2013 and is privately owned. It operates from Alban City School in the city of St Albans in Hertfordshire. Children have use of a dedicated classroom. Further facilities include the use of a hall, gym, community room, enclosed and partially outside courtyard, playground and accessible toilets, which are shared with the school.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. Children from the age of two years can attend. There are currently 51 children on roll in the early years age group. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. It supports children who speak English as an additional language. Children come from the local area and attend a variety of sessions, including all day, throughout the week.

The pre-school is open five days a week during term time. Sessions run from 8.30am until 11.30am and 12.15pm until 3.15pm. A lunch club also runs from 11.30am to 12.15pm each day. There are four members of staff including the manager who work with the children, three of whom hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3. One member of staff is unqualified. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- continue to enhance the already very good systems for monitoring resources and activities in planning to ensure that children's exceptional progress is sustained.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The welcoming and creatively resourced environment encourages children's development across all areas of learning exceptionally well. The energy and enthusiasm shown by children in this pre-school is second to none. This is a result of the outstanding practice of ensuring that children are recognised as partners in their own learning and development. Staff ensure that children's points of view are fully incorporated into planned activities. As a result, they are always fruitfully engaged in play and learning. All the topics reflect their interests and staff are extremely skilled at making every event relevant and engaging. For example, staff embrace children's fascination and curiosity of castles by planning a wealth of exciting activities. Children and staff transform the role-play area into a castle where

children thoroughly enjoy dressing up as knights and princesses. They recall the different roles of these characters from previous activities and become totally absorbed in imaginative play with each other. Consequently, children are able to represent their own ideas through role play and stories.

Staff are excellent teachers and carers. They are superb at delivering activities in such a way that children cannot fail to be stimulated and engaged. Staff divide the group at circle time to ensure that the learning needs of individual children are met. As a result, children are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage in learning as older children benefit from thought provoking adult-led activities that extend their concentration. For example, staff are extremely animated as they regularly use puppets such as 'ringo the flamingo' to encourage children to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Even routine events, such as learning the days of the week and recording the weather are interactive. Children listen attentively at circle time as all staff have an infectious enthusiasm, which encourages children to join in and take part. Children confidently identify that Monday begins with 'M'. This is because of the excellent use of phonics, which is introduced at a young age. Literacy is promoted exceptionally well throughout the pre-school, with a vast selection of age-appropriate books, interactive wall displays and clearly labelled signs. Staff teach children the pattern of sounds in their name as they clap out the syllables. Excellent teaching strategies encourage children to share the knowledge they have recently learnt as staff ask open-ended questions that challenge children's critical thinking.

Staff are also skilled at providing one-on-one attention to enable children to rapidly learn new skills. They help those children who are learning English as an additional language to develop their communication skills. Staff use key words and pictures to aid the development of English and take extra time to ensure that children understand and feel included in all activities. They also come alongside individual children as they try out new resources to help them develop their confidence. For example, staff demonstrate how the realistic looking foam bricks and stones can be used to construct an enclosure. This inspires children to have a go themselves and they begin to make excellent links in their learning as they work together to construct a castle. They explore how to balance the stones and use mathematical language, such as, tall, short, wide and behind as they build. Staff motivate the children as they sensitively join in and consistently praise their achievements. All children's achievements are recorded in learning journals and the key person for each child regularly monitors their development to ensure that they are continually making excellent progress. Comprehensive information is gathered from parents as children begin attending the pre-school. Staff successfully identify ways to help children move forward from regular detailed observations and assessments. Parents feel fully included in their children's learning as they regularly contribute to these assessments and share children's experiences during 'soft starts' first thing in the morning. Staff also provide innovative ideas for parents to support their children's learning at home. For example, they share library books together and search for pictures of castles. This fabulous approach ensures that staff are able to provide the best possible approach to helping their children develop. Children's individual next steps feed into the carefully planned child-initiated and adult-led activities. However, there is further scope to develop this already effective system to ensure specific children benefit from such activities, by consistently identifying them on planning documents. Staff complete extremely detailed progress checks at age two and these cover children's development in the prime areas of

learning. All parents contribute to these to ensure excellent continuity of progress in both learning and care. Undoubtedly, the superb range of activities coupled with the outstanding teaching from staff enables all children to become highly confident and competent learners.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The carefully considered key person system offers children exceptional security and consistency throughout their time at pre-school. This ensures that children build warm, trusting relationships with staff from when they first join. In addition, it enables them to relax and enjoy their learning secure in the knowledge that they are cared for by people they know very well. The deep appreciation staff develop of children's backgrounds, strengths and interests enables them to offer children well-targeted support, which promotes their well-being to an excellent standard and enables them to settle quickly. For example, on arriving at pre-school children seek out their key person to excitedly tell them what they have made over the weekend. Staff take the time to listen carefully and always get down to the children's level to demonstrate their genuine interest. They gather extremely detailed information from parents to ensure their child's needs are effectively met.

Care practices are extremely good and children learn about good hygiene routines, such as hand washing. As they do this, they are developing a very strong sense of independence and gaining in confidence as they clearly know that they need to 'wash the germs away'. Older children display high levels of responsibility and self-esteem as they build positive relationships with younger children. For example, they work cooperatively to support them putting on their coats ready to play outside. In addition, children make independent choices as they help themselves to the clearly labelled good quality resources and equipment. There are good opportunities for children to learn about healthy lifestyles. Children choose when to help themselves to the healthy and nutritious snack and pour their own drinks. They benefit from regular fresh air and exercise during outdoor play and meticulously planned gym sessions. Children have the opportunity to stay for a hot meal at lunchtime, which is freshly prepared by the school cook, or they may bring a packed lunch. The staff ensure that any special dietary requirements are followed. All children very much enjoy this social occasion and benefit from the interaction with their friends and staff who sit with them. Staff teach children the health benefits of food through weekly cooking activities. Children's understanding of safety is threaded through many daily routines and activities. They have a very mature understanding of how to contribute to their own safety. For example, they carefully negotiate space as they skilfully ride bikes in the playground and know that they must remain in the coned off area.

Children behave exceptionally well as staff have high expectations and clear boundaries in this nurturing environment. Positive behaviour is encouraged extremely well through consistent praise. Any unwanted behaviour is discussed with children calmly in age and developmentally appropriate language. Children have an excellent understanding of acceptable behaviour as the children have agreed their own rules with staff. These are clearly displayed in the book area for all to see. The consistent approach that staff use to manage behaviour creates a harmonious environment in which children thrive. Staff have

robust plans in place to support children as they move onto formal education, either within the same of another school. Children are already familiar and demonstrate their confidence as they move around the school to enjoy gym sessions and activities in other parts of the school building. Excellent partnership with Reception teachers is already in place as they regularly visit the children and get to know them. Staff also plan to do activities based around exploring the children's thoughts and feelings to support them emotionally. For example, reading stories about school and discussing their new uniforms. This excellent practice helps children to view their move as an exciting adventure.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and staff work extremely well together to ensure that the pre-school is very well organised and that daily routines operate smoothly. They have an exceedingly good understanding of their responsibilities in meeting the welfare, safeguarding and learning and development requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager and staff ensure that there are vigilant safeguarding procedures in place. These are supported by comprehensive policies and procedures that are in place for staff and parents to be aware of and fully understand throughout the pre-school. The manager is the designated safeguarding person and has attended specific training to fulfil this role. This ensures that she has a thorough understanding and knowledge of procedures and how to support staff and parents should she have any concerns. Risk assessment procedures are professionally considered. Balanced risk assessments ensure that the pre-school is able to consider the benefit of an activity or resource against the risk involved. Children, therefore, play and learn in an exceptionally safe and secure environment and thoughtful staff deployment further ensures their well-being.

Robust and efficient systems ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately vetted. Adults are not allowed to work with children until all checks are cleared. Thorough induction, appraisal and supervision systems are in place to identify staff training needs and to make sure that these are clearly targeted to improve the pre-school's already excellent practice. All staff are encouraged to develop their own professional practice and to share the benefit of this with their colleagues. The manager is inspirational. She acts as a positive role model for other staff as she uses her wealth of experience to inspire staff to become experts in their field. Regular team meetings offer staff a forum within which they can reflect on the needs of individual children and the pre-school as a whole.

Self-evaluation is used extremely effectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and to set future goals to promote continuous development. All staff, parents and children contribute to this process. Staff regularly reflect upon the service they provide and provide ideas about how to develop the pre-school further. All changes are considered in relation to the benefit that they will bring to children. For example, recent improvements include welcoming pet fish into the pre-school following children's requests. This enables children to show their care and consideration for living things. The educational programme is also very well monitored. The manager closely monitors children's progress to ensure children are meeting or exceeding the expected levels of development. Where gaps are identified, staff are quick to respond by providing focused

activities to help children develop their skills. There are accurate systems for monitoring children's progress and the management team are working to enhance this further so that children's progress is sustained. Partnership working with other professionals and agencies is exceptionally well established. This is possible because of the manager's strong links in place prior to managing this pre-school. Superb links with the school are also used effectively to support children's individual needs. Staff have built excellent working relationships with parents and value their active contribution to their children's life while at the pre-school. Parents speak very highly of the pre-school, and comment that 'they love the way the staff interact with the children, as they really understand how they learn best' and that 'they would not change anything, as the staff do an amazing job'.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY465412
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	932146
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	51
Name of provider	Caroline Jill Smith
Date of previous inspection	not applicable
Telephone number	07854918904

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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