

Saplings Pre-School

The Scout Hut, Birchwood Way, Park Street, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL2 2SF



Inspection date	22 February 2017
Previous inspection date	26 October 2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Good	2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Good	2
Outcomes for children		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision is good

- The pre-school is well established within the community. Parents are complimentary about the care and education their children receive. They say that their children's speech has developed since coming to the pre-school.
- Additional funding is used effectively to target the needs of children who receive it. For example, story books and bags have been purchased for children to take home and share with their families.
- Children new to the pre-school are helped to feel secure so that they settle easily. Staff are attentive to their needs and older children are caring towards their younger friends.
- Staff help children to behave well. They encourage them to express their feelings and to resolve any slight disagreements during their play. This helps children learn how to play harmoniously together.
- Partnerships with professionals and other providers are very strong. Information about children's care and learning is shared in great detail. This helps to promote a continuous approach to children's learning and care.
- There are effective procedures in place to evaluate the quality of the provision. The manager, committee members and staff have identified further areas to develop so that the pre-school continually improves.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The monitoring of staff performance is not sharply focused on raising the quality of teaching to the highest level.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- sharpen the focus on performance management so that staff have more opportunities to build on their practice, in order to raise the quality of teaching to the highest level.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and looked at relevant documentation. She also looked at evidence of the suitability of staff and the committee members.
- The inspector spoke to a small number of parents and took account of their views.

Inspector

Maura Pigram

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff attend regular training and are up to date with current legislation. They rigorously monitor children's safety and welfare. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to help ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. The well-qualified manager uses the skills of her staff to support children's learning. Since the last inspection, she has employed a qualified teacher whose approach to supporting children's interest in books is having a positive impact on children's concentration and their emerging vocabulary. The manager works closely with staff to monitor the progress of children. They identify any gaps in learning to help meet the needs of all children.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff have a good understanding of how children learn. They plan interesting activities based on their interests to help them make good progress in their learning. For example, children have fun imaginatively playing in the doctors play area. Good use is made of resources, such as an interactive doll showing body organs. New words are introduced and simple explanations help children to understand how their bodies work. Children who speak English as an additional language are helped to make connections in their learning. For example, puppets and small play figures which represent a popular story are effectively used to support children's language and understanding. Younger children enjoy freely exploring the wide range of resources and sensory activities on offer. For example, they have fun discovering how they can make interesting pictures using paints and making marks in the paint with small transport vehicles.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children benefit from outdoor play and exercise, which helps to support their physical skills well. For example, they explore the mud kitchen area, pretend to be astronauts in the space rocket and confidently use slides. Children's independence is encouraged and staff are sensitive to their needs. Younger children are able to bring comforters from home so that they continue to feel secure during the day. Children's dietary needs are well known and staff provide various nutritious meals for them. They calmly encourage children to try different food and discuss the benefits of eating well. This helps to promote a healthy lifestyle. Children's safety is promoted at all times, consistent messages from staff, such as not running indoors contributes to keeping children safe.

Outcomes for children are good

All children make good progress in all areas of development from their starting points. This includes children who benefit from funded education and those who speak English as an additional language. Children are developing confidence in their own abilities. They recognise different letter sounds and early numeracy skills are supported. Children show a keen interest in sharing books and are helped to develop good relationships with each other. They are successfully acquiring the key skills they need to move on to the next stage of their learning or school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	123565
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	1059399
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	22
Name of registered person	Saplings Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP905249
Date of previous inspection	26 October 2012
Telephone number	0798 5968 759

Saplings Pre-School was registered in 1999 and is committee led. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. One member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am to 12.15pm and from 12.15pm to 3pm. Children can stay for a variety of sessions and a lunch club is provided. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language.

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