

The Early Bird Pre-School (Westbury)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY414258
Inspection date	03/11/2011
Inspector	Veronica Sharpe
Setting address	Lime Tree Childrens Centre, West View, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, SG6 3QN
Telephone number	07917606828
Email	westbury@earlybirdpreschool.co.uk
Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Early Bird Pre-School (Westbury) re-registered in 2010. The pre-school operates from a purpose built building at the Lime Street Children's Centre, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to accept a maximum of 24 children at any one time. There are currently 58 children on roll, of these 16 are eligible for funded early education. The pre-school is open during term times Monday to Friday from 9am until 3.30pm. An optional breakfast club is offered from 8.30am until 9am. The setting also offers a holiday playscheme during the school summer holiday. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff including the manager. All members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two members of staff hold early years degrees. The owner holds Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). The pre-school is working towards the Hertfordshire Quality Standards accreditation and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is Outstanding.

Exceptionally enthusiastic and talented staff ensure a consistently high quality of care and learning for each child. Children are energetic and eager to take part in an exemplary range of age-appropriate activities, as a result they make rapid progress towards the early learning goals. Self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and actions for improvement are identified and acted upon expeditiously. Inclusion is promoted very well because staff have exceptional relationships with parents and therefore know about each child's needs, interests and abilities. Safeguarding is embedded into the daily life of the setting; as a result children feel safe and secure.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- ensuring parents are fully aware of the many ways they can share information with the setting on an ongoing basis.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding children is given the highest priority. Each staff member undertakes child protection training and is fully aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe. Rigorous recruitment processes ensure any adults in contact with the children are safe and suitable to do so. Children's welfare is significantly enhanced by exemplary documentation; policies and procedures are routinely scrutinised by staff and management to ensure they are updated and relevant. Clear systems for induction and mentoring means students and volunteers are very well informed about all essential matters, such as safeguarding and supervision.

Parents are extremely positive about the quality of the care and learning. They praise staff for their warmth and approachability and say their children are highly confident and settled. Parents receive a wealth of well-written information about the setting and have daily opportunities to speak with their key person. Parents' views are sought about the quality of the provision and the setting is very responsive to those views, for example, a breakfast club has been introduced to meet the needs of working parents. Parents' contributions to planning for their children are valued, and excellent examples can be seen on the 'wow' boards and in the learning journeys. Although parents are delighted with the quality of the provision, a few are not entirely aware of additional ways to share information, such as, the optional daily communication books.

Partnerships with other agencies and schools are excellent. The staff share activities with the adjacent children's centre, such as the fathers' group and have robust systems in place to share staff expertise. Well-established relationships with the local feeder schools and nursery classes ensure children make their transitions with confidence. Very effective links with other professionals, such as speech and language specialists mean children have tailored support for their additional needs. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support due to the staff's in-depth knowledge of each child's interests and abilities.

Excellent use is made of space and resources; organisation of the indoor areas in particular is exemplary, with clearly focused areas and well thought out resource stations. This enables children to make real choices and extend their own play and learning. Furniture and equipment supports children's differing needs, for example, chairs range in size and shape. The outdoor area has been a focus for improvement recently and offers children an exciting play space all year round. Robust monitoring of the quality of the provision and reflective self-evaluation supports staff in identifying areas for change and improvement. Staff, children and parents all make their contributions and enable the setting to target action plans effectively. Staff are dedicated and enthusiastic professionals; they are well trained and fully supported by the owner of the organisation in achieving higher qualifications. Each member of staff shows a genuine commitment to improving the outcomes for each and every child.

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

Children's voices are heard because staff are aware of the importance of recognising their individual needs and interests. Staff and children review the activities and resources together and decide what to do tomorrow. Because each child has an opportunity to make real decisions about their own learning, they feel valued and their self-esteem is very high. Sensitive observation and assessment adds to staff knowledge and ensures each child's learning experience is tailored for their specific needs. Each child's record of learning is their own work as they choose their favourite art creations and take their own photographs to illustrate to others what they can do.

Children participate in an extremely broad range of interesting and innovative activities. They learn with great enthusiasm both indoors and out, for example, they join in with energetic songs, listen avidly to a story about 'Monkey and me', or build obstacle courses with blocks. Children explore pumpkins as part of their learning for Halloween; they hammer golf tees into the flesh, and have pumpkins cut up so they can touch and smell the insides. This promotes their enthusiasm for the world around them. Natural products feature highly in the resources, for example, children go for walks to collect leaves and twigs, then use them in their play in the sensory area. Staff hide toy bugs in the leaves and encourage children to find them using magnifiers.

Children clearly love their imaginative play and make excellent use of the resources, such as dressing up clothes and kitchen utensils. They are equally capable of creating their own scenarios, using the garden play house as a wedding chapel, or a home for pirates. The pre-school pet guinea pigs are content to be stroked and handled because children have learned to be kind and gentle. They are equally kind to their friends and show exceptional sharing skills, given their age and stage of development.

Children's opportunities to develop their skills for the future are excellent. They freely access a wide range of technology, such as electronic toys, musical instruments and cameras. They delight in taking photographs of themselves at play, and excitedly watch as the pictures are printed. An extensive range of mark making materials enables children to develop their pre-writing skills. Staff promote children's understanding of numbers in fun ways, such as songs and rhymes, or using specialist matching blocks. Children learn positional language such as left and right, front and back as they dance energetically to active songs and bang their claves in time to the music.

Children learn to appreciate their own differences and similarities as they explore their family books. Photographs of the children at play are proudly displayed to show their ideas and achievements. Staff use a range of resources to support children who have English as an additional language, such as visual images, music and stories from other lands. Children contribute to each other's personal events and religious celebrations, for example, they visit a church for harvest festival, or make tea lights for Diwali.

Children eat healthy and nutritious snacks and freely access water; they show they understand the links between active exercise and feeling thirsty. Snacks are prepared at the meal table, which enables children to cut and peel and learn where their foods come from. Staff actively engage children in conversations about foods and whether they should be everyday choices, or occasional treats. A productive garden gives children excellent opportunities to grow and tend foods, such as tomatoes, beans and peas. A significant number of children have food allergies or special dietary needs; staff have a very good understanding of these and have specialist training so they know what to do in an emergency. Parents provide lunch for their children and have plenty of good ideas of foods and recipes, which help to ensure all food is suitably healthy. Staff encourage children to develop good hygiene practice as they thoroughly wash hands together.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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