

Inspection of St Luke's Pre-School

St Luke's Church, Langley Way, WATFORD WD17 3EJ

Inspection date: 10 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children's interests are at the heart of staff practice. The manager and staff carefully plan and prepare the pre-school environment daily. They provide activities that target children's individual interests and learning needs. For example, every morning, children and staff enjoy group dance sessions. This supports children to start their day with a positive attitude to learning. As a result, children settle well and remain deeply engaged in exciting learning opportunities throughout their time at the pre-school.

The manager establishes a highly effective key-person system that supports all children to feel safe and secure. Children find comfort and reassurance in staff when tired, and they delight in showing off their artistic creations. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in the pre-school. They develop particularly close bonds with nurturing one-to-one staff, who demonstrate a deep understanding of their specific needs.

Children are kind and behave well. They demonstrate empathy for one another, comforting their friends when hurt or upset. Staff have a consistent approach to supporting children's behaviour. They establish clear boundaries and provide children with strategies to support them in managing conflicts. As a result, children understand the need to take turns and are learning to resolve disputes independently.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The manager and staff place a strong focus on developing children's language skills. They provide children with opportunities to engage in individual and group discussions. This supports children to become confident communicators. Staff enable children to learn new words and develop a wide vocabulary. For example, they encourage children to explore the 'crunchy' and 'shiny' papers in a craft activity. Children of all ages develop a love of stories. They independently explore a variety of books and act out their favourite ones using props and models of the characters.
- Parents speak highly of the experienced manager and nurturing staff. They comment on the close relationships children form with staff and how this supports them to enjoy their time at the pre-school. Parents of children with SEND are particularly complimentary about staff and the immense support they provide. Staff encourage parents to engage in children's learning. They provide exciting teaching opportunities for children to share at home. For example, children take home caterpillars to explore with their families. They document their growth and watch them turn into cocoons. Families then return them to pre-school and release them as butterflies.

- Staff monitor children's learning closely. This allows them to identify gaps in children's knowledge and plan learning opportunities to promote their development. For example, staff conduct daily outdoor play sessions. Small groups of children participate in planned activities that support their specific learning needs. However, staff do not always adapt their teaching to the same high standard. On occasion, their discussions and questions do not fully promote the learning of the most able children.
- Children are encouraged to be independent. Older children in particular take on additional responsibilities in the pre-school. At mealtimes, they sit at their own table and demonstrate good manners and appropriate behaviour. Children help staff to pour drinks and clear away plates and cutlery after eating. This prepares them well for the routines of school.
- The manager closely monitors staff performance and well-being. She conducts regular appraisals to identify additional training opportunities based on staff needs and interests. For example, staff who display a particular interest in the outdoor learning environment complete targeted training courses to further support their practice.
- Children explore other cultures and customs in age-appropriate and engaging ways. For example, children create foods from other countries out of modelling dough. They listen attentively to the songs staff sing in other languages and delight at clapping along to them.
- The manager and staff continuously evaluate the care they provide. They reflect well on all aspects of the provision, seeking feedback from parents, children and other professionals. They use this knowledge to make well-considered changes that support children's development and well-being. For example, recent adjustments to the morning routine mean that children separate from carers well and settle quickly into play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure staff consistently adapt their teaching during activities to further challenge the most able children.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY501107
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10335567
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	37
Number of children on roll	43
Name of registered person	Wright, Danielle
Registered person unique reference number	RP515488
Telephone number	07927 464131
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

St Luke's Pre-School originally registered in 2009 and re-registered in 2016 due to changing to sole ownership. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school operates from 8.30am until 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, during term time only. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Antonia Campbell

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector considered the views of parents by speaking to several parents during the inspection and reviewing feedback letters.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including evidence of the suitability of all staff.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and children during activities.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching to assess the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector and the manager completed a joint observation of an activity to assess the quality of teaching.
- The inspector held discussions with staff about the monitoring of learning and development in the setting and tracked the progress of several children.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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