

Inspection of Little Robins Pre-School

Alban City School, 7 Hatfield Road, St Albans AL1 3RR

Inspection date:

13 February 2025

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children arrive happy and settle well at this setting. They have good relationships with staff who are warm and caring towards them. However, some staff do not have all the knowledge and skills they need to help children make consistently good progress in their learning. Nevertheless, staff and leaders provide a welcoming environment where children feel safe. This helps develop children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children behave well. Staff prompt children to make their own choice of what they would like to do next to support their independence. Children navigate their learning provision with ease and follow the setting's routines. Some of the routines help children learn. For example, when all staff clap their hands, children understand it is time to line up at the door to go outside for their daily exercise. This also supports children's gross motor skills and guides them to embrace a healthy lifestyle. At times, activities such as story time, are not accessible to all children to enable them to actively be part of the group and enhance their learning further.

Staff and leaders offer children experiences, such as trips to the theatre and bringing alpacas to the setting to support their understanding of the world. They recognise and praise children for their efforts and achievements which helps them feel valued at this setting.

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

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Some staff do not have the skills to help children make good progress in their learning. The arrangements for supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language are not consistently effective. Emerging concerns are not always acted on swiftly to ensure that children get the help they need and are included in all learning opportunities. At times, staff's interactions are not sustained long enough and do not extend children's learning to build on what children already know and can do.
- Children enjoy exploring the garden. Some children are happy to build dens with their peers to engage in imaginative play. They concentrate well and contribute to this play. Staff supports children to use the slide safely, prompting them to take turns. Children giggle with excitement as they slide down through a colourful curtain held by supportive staff. This helps develop children's social skills and role-play skills.
- Staff encourage children to explore a great selection of sensory activities. Children enjoy mixing different colour paint to notice the effect it has. They name the colours successfully, before dipping their hands in the paint to make

prints on their paper. Staff then prompt them to count the prints to further develop their numeracy skills. Children also enjoy exploring sand and sand tools to mould it into castles. They use scoops and cups to fill with sand and follow staff's instructions to turn it upside down and pat it to reveal the mould. Children concentrate well and persevere when challenges occur. This helps develop children's fine motor skills and dexterity.

- Children enjoy books. As they listen to their favourite story about going on a bear hunt, they complete the actions and repeat some refrains. Children point at the characters and comment on what they are doing, smiling with content, which supports their literacy skills. However, not all children benefit consistently from story time activities to develop their communication and language skills to higher levels.
- Leaders are reflective and offer a diverse practice. Staff have sound knowledge of their key children. Staff gather information from parents about their children when they first start at this setting, which helps them tailor the settling-in process. They get to know the children to understand what they enjoy. This information is used to plan some of the activities. However, some staff do not implement the curriculum effectively in a way that offers children the appropriate level of challenge.
- Parents mention the communication is effective. They appreciate some of the positive learning experiences their children encounter while at this setting. Some parents find their children are not supported consistently to settle and start making progress in their learning.
- Staff say they enjoy working at this setting and feel well supported by leaders. They benefit from regular meetings and appraisals and complete regular training to keep their knowledge current. However, the monitoring of their practice is not robust enough to help staff develop the knowledge they need to become skilful practitioners.

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 meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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support staff to implement a curriculum that clearly identifies what it is that all children need to learn and reflects their individual needs and offers appropriate challenge, to help them make good progress	28/03/2025
improve arrangements for supporting children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language so that any emerging concerns about a child's development are acted on promptly.	28/03/2025

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

- review the organisation of routines to provide children with consistent high-level learning opportunities
- guide staff to engage children consistently in rich interactions that enhance their communication and language skills
- improve the monitoring of staff practice to develop their knowledge and understanding of how children learn so that all children benefit from consistently good-quality learning experiences.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY544506
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10368309
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	42
Name of registered person	Little Robins Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP544505
Telephone number	07539246860
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2019

Information about this early years setting

Little Robins Pre-School opened in 2013 and re-registered in 2017. The setting employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The setting is open from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3.15pm. The setting provides funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anca Sandu

Inspection activities

- The inspector and manager completed a learning walk together. They discussed how the curriculum is organised and what they want children to learn.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and education, both outdoors and indoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Children spoke with the inspector about the activities they were doing.
- Some parents met with the inspector who took into account their views.
- The inspectors carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the managers. They looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working at the setting.

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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