

Inspection of Pilgrims Way Pre-School

Leys Primary School, Ripon Road, Stevenage SG1 4QZ

Inspection date: 13 May 2025

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 happily arrive at the pre-school. They are warmly welcomed by staff and eager to explore the enticing environment full of meaningful activities, both indoors and outdoors. These are carefully planned to reflect children's interests and help them to recall and embed new knowledge. Staff know the children they care for well and form warm nurturing bonds with them. Children talk about how they love staff.

Children express what they have recently learnt about flowers and growth through creative activities. They use forks dipped in bright paint to create prints that represent petals and stems. Staff encourage children to solve problems and assess risks. They place a strong emphasis on promoting children's communication and language skills. Children eagerly learn and use the sign of the week. Staff speak clearly to children and sensitively support the correct pronunciation of words. Staff have high expectations of children and are positive role models. They remind children to use good manners and show respect for others by explaining to them to be patient and wait for their turn to place the picture card on the daily timeline. Partnership with the host school is strong. Children benefit from use of the school grounds where they explore the meadow. This helps to broaden their understanding of seasonal changes and observe wildlife, such as squirrels and bugs.

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

- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. Staff use an extensive range of assessment methods, such as specialised software to precisely identify the support that children need. Support plans and personalised strategies are superbly implemented to help children reach their full potential. Partnership working with external agencies is strong. Parents are sensitively supported through the referral process.
- Staff support children in developing their social skills as they role play with friends. They pretend to make soup for each other mixing water and soil together. Children show kind relationships towards each other. For instance, they pass them a selection of books to choose from.
- Leaders and staff are highly reflective on the provision they offer children and plan a curriculum that supports all children to make good progress in readiness for their next stage in learning. Staff use overarching themes, such as life cycles to support children to build on what they know. However, when staff gather children together for whole group times teaching is not consistently sequenced to meet the individual needs of younger children. For example, staff challenge children to work out what day it was yesterday and what day it will be tomorrow. Younger children do not have a secure understanding of time and

how the days of the week represent this. This means that during some group times all children's learning is not consistently promoted to the highest level.

- There is a strong emphasis on staffs' well-being. Staff say that they feel valued and enjoy working at the pre-school where there is a clear ethos of team work. They have opportunities to complete regular training. New knowledge is shared with the whole team to support a consistent approach. Any additional funding the pre-school receives is precisely used to support children's individual needs.
- Parents are welcomed in to the pre-school for several open days throughout the year. This enables them to engage in discussions with their child's key person about their child's achievements and next steps. Staff offer parents practical guidance and resources to support key transitions, such as toilet training, and to promote the importance of good oral health. However, when parents are unable to attend open days, or when children's next steps change between these events, arrangements to share this information and offer specific ideas to support learning at home are not well established. Nevertheless, parents talk about how their children are very happy to attend the pre-school.
- Children are physically active. They benefit from organised enrichment activities from a visiting professional that increases their physical abilities. Children persevere to balance, positioning one foot on a football and jump while stretching their arms in the air.
- Children enthusiastically share their mathematical knowledge with staff and their friends. For instance, at snack time they compare sizes, describing the milk bottle as big and the jug as tiny. Staff introduce some mathematical language, such as more and less. However, they do not consistently make best use of their interactions in children's play to challenge or extend children's mathematical thinking.

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:

- refine whole group teaching to precisely match the individual learning needs of all children
- further improve communication with parents so that all parents have information about their children's next steps and how they can support their child's learning at home
- enhance the teaching of mathematics to provide children with further challenge to strengthen their skills further.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY544338
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10388187
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 3
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	56
Name of registered person	Pilgrims Way Pre-School CIC
Registered person unique reference number	RP544337
Telephone number	01438 369519
Date of previous inspection	1 July 2019

Information about this early years setting

Pilgrims Way Pre-School re-registered in 2017. The pre-school is open from 8.40am until 3.30pm, Monday to Friday during term time. There are eight staff members who work directly with the children; of these, seven hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 2 or above. The pre-school provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Lorraine Pike

Inspection activities

- The inspector and manager completed a learning walk across all the areas of the pre-school to understand how the curriculum is organised.
- A joint observation of an activity was carried out by the inspector and the manager.
- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors. She assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day.

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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