

Inspection of Walkern Pre School

C/O Walkern Primary School, High Street, Walkern, STEVENAGE, Hertfordshire SG2 7NS

Inspection date: 29 January 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are very happy in this child-focused and nurturing pre-school. Staff prioritise building strong relationships with children and their families prior to them starting. This proves highly effective in helping children to swiftly settle. Children show that they feel safe and secure as they confidently interact with the inspector and introduce themselves to Billie Bear and their friends. This also helps children to flourish in their self-esteem as they speak out loud. Staff plan learning experiences that focus on what children need to learn next and their interests. This means that children are drawn to stimulating activities that support all children to make good progress.

Staff are positive role models and frequently praise children for their achievements. Therefore, children show a can-do attitude. They persevere to balance different shaped blocks on top of each other to create complex structures, when these fall, they immediately re-build them. Children show good critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Children benefit from professionals who visit the pre-school, such as paramedics and police officers. They learn about their roles and the specialist equipment they use. Children find out about the lunar new year and enjoy looking at photos of their own and other's families. This helps them to develop an understanding of the wider world, including similarities and differences. Children solve simple mathematical problems, such as subtraction through action songs.

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

- Leaders and the staff team successfully plan and implement interventions, such as nurture groups that support children to gain high levels of attention and focus. This enables them to fully engage with the ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. An overarching theme introduces children to new concepts where staff seamlessly incorporate children's individual next steps in learning.
- Children with special educational needs/and or disabilities are very well supported. Staff form strong partnerships with other professionals and use a range of strategies, such as real objects that represent an activity or routine. Any additional funding the pre-school receives is used to support children's individual needs.
- Leaders and committee members are highly reflective and invested in their roles. They routinely observe staff practice, providing guidance and support to continually enhance the quality of provision. All staff complete regular training. As a result of recent training staff have an increased knowledge of innovative methods to support children's communication and language.
- Children are keen to recall previous experiences and share their knowledge with staff. For instance, they use complex sentences to talk about the different countries they have visited. Staff introduce children to a map of the world and

challenge them to predict how long it will take them to travel from Scotland to Russia. However, staff do not always encourage children to build on prior knowledge to embed and build on new knowledge and skills.

- Children's good health is well promoted. They have ample opportunities to engage in physical play, not only in the pre-school's inviting outdoor area but also within the grounds of the host school. Children thoroughly enjoy jumping in muddy puddles. They develop strong core muscles and coordination. Staff actively extend their physical skills by encouraging them to roll on their stomachs on a large inflatable. Children experience a wide range of tastes, such as noodles and fruit and vegetables that they help to grow.
- Children's behaviour is good and appropriate to their stage of development. They are beginning to build friendly relationships and understand about expectations. For example, children listen and follow staff instructions to line up and walk behind each other as they participate in an exciting Chinese dragon dancing activity outdoors. Staff use a range of strategies, such as sand timers to support children to understand when it is their turn to play with popular resources. They calmly provide children with sensitive reminders when they occasionally struggle to follow behavioural expectations. However, staff do not always help children to understand the reasons why some behaviour is not appropriate towards others.
- Relationships with parents are strong. They, along with children's extended family, are warmly welcomed to regular events that offer an insight in to their child's pre-school experience. These events are carefully scheduled to support high levels of parental engagement. Staff keep parents fully informed of their child's achievements. They also support families with changes in their lives and provide ideas to aid learning at home, such as story sacks to support children's love of books. Parents comment how they and their children have built amazing relationships with the whole staff team. They value staffs nurturing approach and talk about how much their children love to attend.

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:

- help children to recall their prior knowledge and support them to build on their existing skills to further their development
- support children to gain a better understanding of the impact their behaviour may have on others.

Setting details

Unique reference number	149665
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10368487
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 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	49
Name of registered person	Walkern Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP902029
Telephone number	01438 861285
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2019

Information about this early years setting

Walkern Pre-School registered in 1991 and is independently run. There are eight staff members who work directly with the children; of these, five hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school is open from 8am until 3.30pm, Monday to Friday during term time. It provides government funded early years education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Lorraine Pike

Inspection activities

- The inspector and managers 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 one of the manager's and the inspector.
- 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 discussions with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector held a meeting with the managers. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school and committee members.
- 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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