

# Inspection of St Leonard's Pre-School, Oakley

St Leonard's Centre, Rectory Road, Oakley, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG23 7ED

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Inspection date: 2 July 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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**

Staff have created a homely environment, where children feel safe and secure. All families are welcomed and are greeted warmly. Children quickly find their name cards that staff have put out for them and they independently put their belongings away. Children are eager to join in the wide range of activities that staff have carefully planned for them. For instance, they use their hands and fingers to manipulate play dough. This helps children to develop their muscles in readiness for writing. Staff consistently praise children's efforts and achievements. As a result, children play happily alongside each other and develop a strong sense of well-being.

Children are confident communicators. They are supported to develop their vocabulary through skilful staff interactions. Children expand their understanding and use of new words. For example, staff discuss sinking and floating as children explore what happens when they place different items into the water tray. Older children demonstrate that they recall prior learning by discussing how the stone sinks because it is heavy. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress through an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum.

Staff know their children well and plan a range of experiences to complement their learning. For example, they provide regular cooking lessons and opportunities for children to learn Spanish. The manager invites visitors, such as emergency services, into the pre-school to talk to children about their jobs. These experiences give children a wider knowledge of the diverse world around them.

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

- The dedicated manager provides staff with effective supervision and ongoing support to help them develop their practice. She observes their practice, holds regular staff meetings and offers further training to build on their skills. For example, recent training has helped staff to better understand the signs of autism and how they can support children and families.
- The manager prioritises staff well-being. She ensures that staff's workload is manageable and that she talks to staff about the importance of work-life balance. This results in high staff morale and a low turnover of staff.
- Partnerships with parents are a real strength of the setting. The manager is proactive in seeking feedback from parents to make improvements. For instance, she has introduced an early drop off time to support working parents. Parents say they feel well informed through daily discussions and newsletters to give them ideas for activities to do at home.
- The manager and staff have high aspirations for children with SEND. They work

closely with parents and professionals to ensure that children get the additional support they need in a timely manner. Additional funding, such as early years pupil premium, is used well to provide resources that meet children's learning needs.

- Generally, staff introduce some mathematical teaching and language into children's play. For example, they discuss 'full' and 'empty' as children fill containers with sand. However, sometimes, less experienced staff are not as confident with implementing the curriculum for mathematics. For example, they do not make the most of good opportunities that arise to promote maths.
- Staff tailor most activities effectively to children's individual interests and needs. However, sometimes adult-focused tasks are too lengthy for the younger children. At these times, children lose interest. This does not help to build on their concentration levels.
- Children's behaviour is good. Staff model respectful behaviour and boundaries. They talk to children about understanding their own emotions and teach them different ways to manage their feelings. For instance, children are encouraged to look at their own facial expressions in mirrors and match faces on cards showing how they are feeling.
- Staff nurture children's independence from the beginning. For example, children confidently dress themselves ready for weekly PE sessions. Staff help children to learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They explain the benefits of exercise and provide clear healthy eating guidelines for parents.
- Staff prepare children for transitioning to school effectively. For instance, they provide school uniform clothing to use in the role-play area. Children choose to put school shirts and dresses on and pretend to pack their school bag. They confidently talk about how excited they are about going to school.

## 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:**

- support all staff to develop confidence in implementing the curriculum for mathematics
- refine the organisation of group activities to maximise younger children's involvement, concentration and focus.

## Setting details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | 507842   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Hampshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10350930   |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises   |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years Register   |
| <b>Day care type</b>                               | Sessional day care   |
| <b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b> | 2 to 4   |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                      | 30   |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 37   |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Oakley With Wootton |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | RP907053   |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 07772378265  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | 17 September 2018  |

## Information about this early years setting

St Leonard's Pre-school registered in 2001. The setting is open from 8.30am to midday on Monday, and Tuesday to Friday from 8.30am to 3pm, during school term time only. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are seven staff currently working with the children. All members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Sarah Richards

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider had 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 the evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed how she implements the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities indoors and outdoors and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- Children and staff spoke to the inspector throughout the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and provider. She reviewed relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- Parents shared their views on the pre-school with the inspector.

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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