

Muriel Green Nursery and Pre-School

Church Crescent, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5JB

Inspection date	03/07/2014
Previous inspection date	29/07/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- All practitioners and governors are committed to the continuous development of the setting. They ensure that children's welfare is always promoted. They comprehensively evaluate practice and prioritise actions. This has contributed to the setting raising their standards significantly and thus improving the provision for children.
- Practitioners and managers work well together to assess and monitor children's development. Therefore, they ensure that all children are offered the activities and support required in order to make good progress.
- Key persons work well with parents, carefully tailoring the settling-in process to meet children's needs. As a result, children form good relationships with practitioners. They are secure and settled and, therefore, positive about their play and learning.
- Practitioners' sensitive interaction promotes children's language and communication skills.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Younger children are not always able to access an extended range of resources outdoors. Therefore, their independent choices are not promoted to the maximum.
- Older children do not always have time to fully extend some of their activities in their base room. This is due to the routine of moving to the nursery provision at set times.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- This inspection was carried out alongside the monitoring visit for the setting's state nursery provision. Therefore, the inspector liaised with HMI and Ofsted's Deputy Director of Early Education, who were carrying out this monitoring visit.
- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside area.
- The inspector held meetings with the nominated person, the deputy managers of the provision and two governors. She carried out joint observations with the nominated person and one of the deputy managers.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- She checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the provider's self-evaluation information and improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day, and from information included in the setting's own parent feedback.

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Full report

Information about the setting

Muriel Green Nursery and Pre-School was registered in 2001, and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is located in the St Albans Children's Development Centre, which is in the city of St Albans, in Hertfordshire. It is managed by a governing body. The pre-school provides day care for children from three months to five years. There is an adjoining nursery where children from four to five years attend. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from five main rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There is currently 14 staff working directly with the children. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and 11 hold qualifications at level 3 or above. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday for 49 weeks of the year. Sessions are from 7.45am to 6.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 109 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. It receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- give consideration to making sure that younger children are able to access an even wider range of resources and make further independent choices in the outdoor area
- enhance the daily routine to ensure that older children consistently have time to continue their activities and to revisit these.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Since their last inspection, practitioners have completed further training. The setting's reviewed procedures are now well established, so that practitioners also receive consistent, practical support in all areas of their work. Consequently, teaching techniques are now purposeful and effective, thereby supporting children in making good progress in their learning. All practitioners have a confident understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and of the different ways in which children learn. They share information efficiently, and take time to ensure that they fully understand children's developmental needs and interests. This enables them to offer children pertinent support and well-planned activities. Children are excited about their play and are motivated to experiment and explore further. Their positive attitudes mean that they are well prepared for school and their future learning. Practitioners observe children as they play, keeping clear records of their progress and interests. They are skilled in using their observations to

identify children's current levels of understanding. They use this information to plan the next steps in children's learning, which include activities and resources that offer them opportunities to reinforce their existing knowledge, and to extend their thinking and understanding further.

Key persons and all practitioners work well with parents. They gather a wide range of initial information which they assess well, so that they have a clear picture of children's starting points. This information is then actively used to inform the initial activity planning and to monitor children's progress. Communication with parents has been improved, and the extended procedures are now embedded in daily practice. Creative information sessions, written explanations and discussions with practitioners mean that parents are now better supported in understanding the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn as they play. Parents have regular opportunities to share updates about their children. For example, they complete 'My magic moment' sheets, describing special events and children's achievements at home. Key persons talk with children about these, and include the information in children's assessment records, so that these have a full overview of children's development. Parents are also supported well in extending their child's learning. For example, each base room has five songs and stories that are consistently used. They have created colourful displays relating to these, lending the relevant books to parents. In addition, practitioners have produced attractive, easy-to-use leaflets for parents, giving details of the books and words of the songs, so that parents can practise these at home with their children. This supports parents in extending their child's language, communication and early reading skills.

Children are supported well in developing the skills needed to learn effectively and to achieve. Practitioners pay attention to children's interests, and use these well in order to provide relevant resources that help children extend, reinforce and clarify their thinking and learning. For example, children bring in favourite books from home and read these together. Practitioners then provide associated resources, such as model animals and figures. Children thoroughly enjoy exploring these. They become totally engrossed as they use the figures to act out the story, carefully helping each other to remember familiar phrases and the main story line, then going on to extend this with their own ideas. Since practitioners are knowledgeable about how children learn, they are competent in implementing the planning, and in creating a secure environment that encourages children to experiment and find out new ways of doing things. For example, after noting that children particularly enjoyed an activity on the previous day, practitioners provide them with time and resources to extend and develop this interest. The children concentrate as they use a range of craft materials to create their own models and illustrations. They confidently ask for help when needed, and the practitioner supports them in thinking about alternative ways to join the materials together. Children are proud of their finished work, reviewing this as they eagerly explain the methods and materials they used. Progress checks are now completed for all children aged between two and three years. These include close consultation with parents and planned next steps, including giving consideration to the need to involve any other professionals, in order to fully support children. There is also a clear procedure whereby managers plan each of the checks in advance and monitor to make sure they have been completed.

The daily planning is well balanced and ensures that children have time to develop their

own play and to participate in more structured, adult-led activities. However, the routine of moving through to the nursery provision at set times during the day means that older children's play is sometimes interrupted. For example, children building with wooden blocks have to stop their play in order to move to the nursery. Practitioners and managers have developed strategies to support children at these times. For example, a practitioner notes children have just set up a game and helps them to take this through to the nursery, then makes sure that they are supported in playing the game. Although there will be a permanent solution to this issue when the two rooms are integrated in the new academic year, children's play is temporarily disturbed at these times. This means that the development of their skills in persevering at tasks is not currently always promoted to the maximum.

Children are offered a good selection of opportunities that promote their physical development. For example, they work with practitioners to build different obstacle courses, which they negotiate either on foot or on scooters. This helps them develop muscle control and skills in balance and coordination. Ongoing discussions and thoughtful procedures mean that children gain a meaningful understanding of diversity. For example, children independently take their photographs from the 'Family board' in each room. They share these with other children, initiating many discussions about different family compositions, cultures and traditions. Well-organised resources and practitioners' sensitive decisions about when to intervene in children's play mean that children have good opportunities to work together. For example, children develop their skills in mathematics, creativity and communication as they work together to make a model using a large construction set. They discuss and compare the different shapes and sizes, work out how to balance the pieces and decide how many are needed on each level of the structure. Practitioners interact well with children and use age-appropriate techniques to promote their language and communication skills. For example, they respond to babies as they babble and repeat new vocabulary to young children, encouraging them to say and use new words. Their good communication and well-planned activities mean that older children learn to listen and follow instructions. For example, during a group music session, children listen carefully as the practitioner asks them to play the instruments slowly, quickly, quietly and loudly. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress in their learning. Key persons work closely with their parents, so that they understand children's development in their home language and, so identify any speech delay at an early stage. They learn key words and phrases in the child's home language, using these daily, so that this is respected and understood.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Good use is now made of the key-person system to support close partnership working with parents. A result of this is that practitioners have a thorough understanding of each child and, so offer them relevant support. This helps children to feel secure and they develop good bonds with practitioners. For example, babies and young children smile and gurgle when practitioners talk to them and sing them songs about the daily routine. Practitioners' very good knowledge of the children means that children's needs are always met in a timely manner. For example, practitioners in the baby room recognise the signs when children are becoming tired. They make up their bottles before they become overly

tired, and make sure there is time to cuddle babies as they feed them before settling them down in the cot for their sleep. Children are positive about their learning, and are proud of their achievements because practitioners recognise and praise their efforts and successes. For example, practitioners praise children as they show them their completed pictures. They are so proud that they go on to explain how they made these and then show them to other practitioners. Children, therefore, feel positive about themselves and their learning, preparing them well for the move to school.

Careful consideration has been given to ensuring that indoor areas are interesting and well-equipped, with a wide variety of easily accessible resources. Children, therefore, have opportunities to choose their resources and explore further. Similarly, the outdoor areas used by older children include a wide range of resources and equipment that promote children's learning. For example, children choose writing materials to make their own illustrations, relating to a book they have just read, and use large boxes to build with. Babies and younger children are offered a generally good range of resources outside, and these ensure that they are offered play opportunities that extend their development in each area of learning. However, they are not always able to freely access as wide a range of resources. This means that their independent choice is not consistently promoted to the optimum during outdoor play.

The setting's thoughtful procedures help new children to settle quickly. Each family is offered a home visit. These enable practitioners to gain a full picture of children's needs and to understand their particular interests, so that these are reflected in the resources when children come for their first sessions. There is a 'Family Board' in each room. This is at children's height and they love taking their family photographs off to look at and share, helping them to feel comforted and at home. Similarly, care is taken to make sure that children's movements from one room to another are smooth and do not upset them. For example, key persons organise a transition meeting, which is attended by parents, children and the child's new key person. This helps both children and parents to become familiar with the new room, and offers the new key person further opportunities to extend their understanding of the child. Children's behaviour is managed well and they are supported in developing a good understanding of how to manage this appropriately themselves. Practitioners always offer children explanations and encourage them to think about other people's feelings. Practitioners' sensitive interaction with children also promotes this area. For example, young children are gently shown how to interact with the babies, and they go on to show great care as they stop to stroke or talk to the babies as they play.

Good hygiene procedures are now well established and these promote children's health and support them in learning about healthy practices. For example, young children eagerly go to the bathroom to wash their hands before eating snack. They competently put their hands under the water, activate the soap dispenser and use paper towels to dry their hands. Additionally, children are offered good opportunities to learn about other healthy lifestyle practices. Their understanding of healthy eating is promoted as they participate in cooking activities, discussing the different ingredients. Most practitioners have completed food hygiene training and set a good example to children. For example, they sit with children at snack and mealtimes and remind them how to serve their food using the appropriate cutlery provided. Children participate in daily routines that help develop their

independence and self-care skills. For example, at meal times, older children collect their own cutlery and plates, help serve themselves and then tidy away at the end of the meal. Throughout the day, practitioners gently guide children and offer them explanations so that they take appropriate risks as they play, thereby learning how to keep themselves safe. For example, young children competently and safely use the age-appropriate climbing frame in the baby room because practitioners have allowed them to explore this equipment, and helped them understand how to use the steps and slide.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted well because arrangements for safeguarding are thorough. All practitioners receive training in this area and are well supported by managers. They ensure that practitioners understand safeguarding issues and would follow the correct procedure should they have any concerns about children. There are robust systems in place to ensure the suitability of all staff and governors. Practical risk assessments have been carried out and are reviewed regularly. These, help to ensure that any hazards are minimised or removed, enabling children to play safely. Self-evaluation procedures have been improved. All practitioners are involved in this, evaluating their practice and giving their ideas for improvements. Feedback from parents and children is also included, giving a clear and representative overview of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. This information is then used to inform and prioritise improvements. A recent change is the re-introduction of local outings for younger children, supported by the use of the 'Buggy Buddies' scheme. This extends children's learning, for example, by enabling them to explore the local environment, note wildlife and listen to the sounds they can hear in the environment.

Since the last inspection by Ofsted, where the setting received a number of actions to improve, and two subsequent monitoring visits, many improvements have been made and are now embedded as part of the setting's daily practice. Managers and practitioners have greatly improved their knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are now fully aware of their responsibilities in meeting both the learning and development requirements and the safeguarding and welfare requirements. This means that children's health, welfare and learning are now all promoted to a good standard. New supervision and appraisal systems are in place and are well established. Consequently, practitioners are supported in developing their professional practice and thereby continuously improving the way in which they promote children's learning. For example, practitioners are supported in attending training and gaining higher childcare qualifications. This has a positive impact on children. Practitioners report that they understand how children learn, and now feel confident to plan and implement activities that are relevant for each child. Good monitoring systems now mean that managers are fully aware of what is happening in each base room throughout the day, and can support this. For example, managers' daily checks include recording what is happening in each room, what activities there are and what the learning intentions are. They re-visit the rooms and receive an update on what has actually happened. They then use this information to complement their monitoring of each child, support practitioners in promoting every child's development and in identifying any areas where children require additional support. The information is also used efficiently to

help identify practitioners' training needs.

A Special Educational Needs Officer has been appointed and has attended relevant training. Although there are no children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, managers and practitioners now demonstrate a good knowledge of the roles of other professionals and the support available. This aids them in seeking any further help required by children and their families. There are good procedures for sharing information with other providers caring for the children. For example, practitioners meet with representatives from other settings to discuss children's progress, ensuring a consistent approach to their care and to the promotion of their development. Practitioners work well with parents, keeping them informed of their child's progress and activities. For example, they complete daily diaries for babies and younger children, and organise regular consultation events. Parents report that they note the many improvements to the setting and appreciate the good partnership working. They also commend the positive attitude and commitment shown by all practitioners. Managers and the governors work well together, and the sustainability of the changes made has been carefully considered. For example, the governors have attended training and, so can ensure, through their continuous monitoring, that the setting maintains and further develops the good standards they have achieved. The setting's positive approach since their last inspection has played a major part in improving their practice and achieving a higher grade. As a result, children are now offered safe, well-planned childcare, with a wide range of activities that interest and motivate them, thereby promoting their learning and development well.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY225164
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	955070
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	60
Number of children on roll	109
Name of provider	The Governing Body of Muriel Green Nursery and Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	29/07/2013
Telephone number	01727 891111

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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