

St Michaels Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 109883 |
| Inspection date | 10 November 2006 |
| Inspector | Tonia Chilcott |
| Setting Address | Church Hall, Colebrook Way, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3BB |
| Telephone number | 07940 569651 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | St Michaels Pre - School |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Sessional care |

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are inadequate – notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Michael's Preschool opened in 1975. It is a community group which is managed by a committee of volunteers. The pre-school operates in St Michael's church hall in Andover. It has access to a kitchen, toilets and a small outdoor area. It serves the local community.

The group operates five days a week during school term times. A maximum of 26 children may attend the preschool at any one time. The preschool is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:45 and 12:15 until 15:00. There are currently 50 children on role. This includes three funded four year olds and 34 funded three year olds. The preschool supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

There are seven members of staff and, of these, all have early years qualifications and one is shortly to commence training. The setting receives support and guidance from the Pre- School Learning Alliance [PLA] and the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership [EYDCP]

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children know how to wash their hands after using the toilet, and do so freely with limited reminding from staff. They wipe their hands before snack, with individual wipes, to ensure that they are clean before eating although staff do not consistently explain to the children the purpose of what they are doing. Children benefit from the good level of staff present who have completed first aid training. This, together with a fully accessible first aid kit, ensures that children are treated appropriately in the event of an injury. All required medication records are in place, and are consistently shared with parents, to ensure that they remain fully aware of any accidents or medication administered to their child.

Children enjoy a selection of healthy and nutritious snacks during the session. They take turns in setting the table for the other children, and enjoy the social occasion that snack time becomes, freely engaging in conversations with one another and staff throughout. Their individual dietary requirements are met by staff, who take time to gather information from parents when the child first attends the preschool.

Children negotiate space well when moving around the setting and running in the garden. They carefully sit down, taking care to avoid one another in a sometimes small space. Some children pedal bikes well, however, the long grass in the garden area hinders them at times, which has not been considered by staff. Many children confidently negotiate the slide, using alternate feet to mount the steps.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are happy and settled within the warm and welcoming environment. Staff make good use of the available display boards and walls, to present examples of children's work and posters, enabling the children to feel valued. Children access and use a good range of toys and materials. Most toys are presented within low level storage, that enables the children to freely select the toys and materials of their choosing. However, at times, lack of space and poor staff deployment, means that toys remain spread over the floor and cause children to trip over, or not have enough available space to play freely.

Children take part in fire drills regularly, and have learned the routine well. For instance, they leave the building quickly and confidently, aware of where they need to line up, and listen for and answer when their name is called from the register. However, staff do not fully explain to children why they are leaving the building, consequently failing to fully extend the children's understanding of the fire drill. Regular risk assessments are undertaken, of the areas of the building that are accessible to children. Although most areas are safe, heaters within the main play area, are not protected fully and thus pose a hazard to children. Although some staff have an adequate understanding of how to identify a child at risk, child protection procedures are not fully understood by all staff and as a result, fail to protect children, consequently not meeting the required standard.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled and enjoy their time within the preschool. Younger children are supported by staff, who follow the Birth to three matters framework, planning a range of activities to meet the needs of younger children. Children settle well into the setting, most happily entering, confidently leaving their parents. Children of all ages, quickly learn the routines of the group.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are independent, confidently making choices from the range of activities that are available to them. They learn to share and take turns during activities. For instance, whilst making Christmas stockings, children patiently wait for their turn, waiting for staff to help them. Most children are developing self care skills, for instance, many know when and how to wash their hands and some are able to put their own coats on. Many children enjoy books, at times, choosing to sit and look at the books available in the home corner. Some children have learned to handle books correctly, and enjoy reading to one another. They actively take part in large group story times, joining in eagerly with their favourite story, Sharks in the Park, where that repeat and join in with the familiar parts of the text.

Staff encourage children to take part in planned activities throughout the session, although at times, some activities are prescribed and adult orientated and do not allow children to make choices or encourage children to maintain their concentration. For example, activities such as making Christmas stockings, are too complex for children to undertake without adult support; consequently, staff eventually complete the stocking for the children as they have lost interest. Children thoroughly enjoy singing along to the piano and have learned a good variety of songs. They sing along, confidently asking for their favourite songs and asking staff to sing some songs at different speeds, for instance, heads, shoulders knees and toes. Space is not used well at all times, however, to ensure that children have sufficient space to play, or that best use is made of the available room. For instance, although children access outdoor play on a regular basis, staff fail to identify that the grass is too long and wet to allow children to play freely with the bikes.

Children respond well to praise and encouragement from staff, proudly showing one another and other adults their stickers that have been given to recognise their achievements. However, at times incidents remain unnoticed by staff, who are not deployed always effectively within the setting. Consequently, children do not consistently learn the expectations for behaviour within the preschool. Children are beginning to recognise a good range of shapes, during activities such as tip tap hammer.

Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn, and, at times, adapt activities well to encourage children's learning. For instance, children learn about shape and colour when playing with the tip tap hammer game. However, staff are not consistently aware of the planned intended learning outcome of activities. Although planning of activities is undertaken, and clearly links to the stepping stones, planning is not consistently in place at each session, to allow staff to know the intended learning outcome and how the activity can be extended or adapted to take into account the individual needs of children. Staff deployment is not effective in ensuring that staff make good use of opportunities within children's free play, to extend children's learning. For instance, staff are deployed to manage

table top activities, and consequently do not extend or direct children's learning in other areas of the setting, for example in the home corner.

Assessment of children is undertaken and observations of their progress recorded on a regular basis. However, the assessment records are not reviewed on a regular basis and consequently do not accurately record children's progress or identify their next steps in learning. Information about the starting points of children's development, when first attending the setting, are not clearly ascertained from parents, or recorded effectively to allow staff to plan to meet the needs of children from the onset of care.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well in response to praise and encouragement from staff, although at times, staff deployment means that some incidents go unnoticed. Children enjoy receiving stickers as rewards for good behaviour, and proudly show one another and adults their stickers throughout the session. Children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by staff, who have a good understanding of their role and the Special Needs Code of Practice. Children are treated as individuals and enjoy a range of opportunities to learn about the wider world, through a variety of activities and resources that provide positive images of society. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are provided with information about the preschools policies and procedures, ensuring that they are fully aware of the settings practices. The prospectus also provides parents with details relating to the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework, ensuring that parents are familiar with the curriculum available and the provision provided by the setting. Parents find staff friendly and approachable, and welcome annual reports about their child's progress at the setting. However, parents are not fully aware that they are able to view and contribute to their child's development records. Development records are not completed on a regular basis and consequently do not provide parents with an accurate record of their child's progress throughout the year.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

A register of children's attendance is in place, although it is not well organised to ensure that the details of children attending on a daily basis are readily available to staff at all times. Effective systems are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work directly with children, and a thorough induction process ensures that new staff are able to quickly learn the routines and procedures within the setting.

Ineffective procedures relating to child protection do not fully protect children from harm, nor are there sufficient procedures in place to ensure that Ofsted remain informed of significant events, consequently not meeting regulations. Insufficient attention is paid to the conditions of registration, and consequently some conditions are not adhered to at all times by staff. Effective systems are in place to ensure the safe storage of all relevant documentation. Overall the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom they provide

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The day to day manager of the setting and the committee work well together, meeting on a regular basis to review and discuss the policies and procedures of the setting. Staff take part in an appraisal system that is used to assess staff

and identify training needs. Evaluation of the curriculum takes place, however is not used effectively to fully identify areas to improve. The setting is however, committed to improving and regularly seek further support and advice from outside agencies, such as the Preschool Learning Alliance.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to increase staff's knowledge and understanding of health and safety issues. Although staff have a sound understanding of health issues, some areas relating to safety have not been fully addressed and as such an action has been raised to address this. The setting was also asked to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment. All parents have now provided this permission, consequently ensuring that children receive appropriate care in the event of an emergency.

At the last inspection of nursery education the setting was asked to explore ways to extend mathematical concepts with subtraction in every day activities. Children now have further opportunities to take part in mathematical activities, and enjoy using equipment, such as compare bears, to support their learning. The setting was also asked to ensure all parents are aware of the progress of their child. Parents now receive an annual report detailing their child's progress, although irregular assessment of children's learning means that parents do not remain fully up to date. The preschool was also asked to ensure staffs are confident in the use of the technological resources and increase the technological resources to fully support the children's learning. Children now access the technological resources on a daily basis, although staff deployment, at times, means that children receive limited support whilst accessing the computer.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and that all staff are aware of and adhere to those procedures

- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and set in place a procedure to notify Ofsted of relevant matters
- assess the risks to children in relation to the heaters within the hall, and take action to minimise these
- ensure that at all times, the conditions of registration are adhered to

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve systems to assess children's progress, enabling a clear picture of children's next steps in learning to be identified
- improve the planning and use the information gained from children's assessments to ensure that children reach their full potential, and to inform parents of their child's progress.
- review the use of space, resources and staff deployment to ensure that children are supported at all times

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk