

# St Marys Church Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 117229  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 25 September 2007   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Christine Slaney  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | St Mary's Church Hall, 10 Market Road, Plymouth, Devon, PL7 1QW |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01752 348525  |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |   |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | The Trustees of Plympton St Mary's Church Pre-School            |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | Full day 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](http://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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Mary's Pre-school was registered since 1991. The pre-school is managed by a committee and operates from a church hall in Plympton, near Plymouth in Devon. Morning sessions are provided on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 09:00 to 11:30, term time only. An additional session is provided on a Tuesday afternoon from 12:30 until 15:00 and there is a lunch club provided from 11:30 until 12:30. The group has the use of a large hall and a smaller room; they also have the use of an equipped outdoor space.

The group is registered to care for up to 26 children aged from two to five years, only 10 of whom can be accommodated in the small room. There are currently 50 children on roll, of whom 32 are three and four-year-olds in receipt of early years funding. The group supports children who have learning difficulties and /or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

There are 10 adults working a variety of sessions with the children. These include four members of staff who are qualified to the national qualification equivalent level 3, two to the equivalent of level 2, and two are working towards qualifying to level 3. One staff member is qualified to

national qualification level 4 and is due to start a Foundation Degree in January 2008. The group receive the support of the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is effectively supported by staff who have a good knowledge of children's individual needs. This includes knowledge of children's specific dietary requirements. Children enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks and lunches. They bring in their own lunch packs, which are kept at an appropriate temperature, as parents provide an ice pack to ensure food remains fresh.

Children benefit from fresh air whenever the weather permits. In addition, they have access to indoor play space on days when the weather is poor. This means they always have opportunities to develop their large muscle movement. As a result they use wheeled toys with skill and control. Children have use of a variety of tools, which include paint brushes pens and pencils. They are supported to pour their own water at the drinks table. Consequently children have meaningful opportunities to develop good hand and eye co-ordination.

Children are supported with self-care skills and hygiene practices like washing hands. The limitations of the building mean that total independence for children is difficult. However, staff have developed some appropriate systems to promote good hygiene practices. These ensure that overall children are protected from the risk of cross infection. These systems include the use of several communal hand washing bowls. These bowls are placed strategically and are used for particular tasks and regularly changed, for instance, following craft activities like painting, or cooking activities, such as, making bread.

All necessary consents are obtained and all documentation to record accidents and the administering of medication are in place.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a well prepared and stimulating environment. The community church hall is clean, secure and well maintained. All equipment and resources are put out and cleared away after each session. These include a parent's information table and display. These comprise of posters and long term planning information. In addition, there are examples of children's work, which are displayed within the limitations of the building and help to make the setting inviting. Staff work very hard each day, to present the hall in a way that is welcoming to both children and parents.

Children access a wide range of toys and games, which are set out for them, easily and safely. There is plenty of space, which is divided effectively; ensuring children have good opportunities to play active games as well enjoying quieter spaces. The well presented rest areas include a place for children to lie down or look at a book quietly. In addition, there are dedicated areas for certain aspects of learning, for instance, in the role play area, which is presently a farm shop. Children can play with real potatoes and carrots to 'buy'. There is also a cooking area to make bread. This means planned activities facilitate children's independent learning well.

Children have some opportunities, to learn about keeping themselves safe in meaningful situations. However, this is not consistency implemented, for example, some children are not encouraged to return bikes and scooters to the dedicated area after use. This means that not all children have the opportunities to learn how to keep themselves and others safe while playing. Regular risk assessments are completed on the premises. As a result children are kept safe within a very secure building. A rigorous record is kept of the times of attendance of adults, children and visitors. This means it is always possible to tell who is on the premises in the event of an emergency. Regular fire drills mean that children can be evacuated quickly and safely in the event of an emergency.

Children's safety is further supported by the staff's sound understanding of the child protection procedure. They are guided in this area by the group's comprehensive policies and procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children of all ages are offered a good range of activities and experiences, as a result they thoroughly enjoy their time in the setting. They have a good attitude to learning and are happy, settling very quickly and becoming engaged purposely throughout the sessions. A good balance of child-led and adult directed play opportunities are available, for example, mixing flour and water to make bread. The two to three-year-old children enjoy a broad range of activities. This is because staff are developing their knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework. This is then used alongside their existing knowledge, to assess children's development and to plan for children's next developmental steps. Children are very much valued and their work is displayed attractively.

#### **Nursery Education.**

Teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. The staff team are passionate and committed to providing good education. They have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and interact well with the children. This means children are keen to learn and eagerly explore the activities that are set out for them, including sand and role play activities. Children are able to access technological toys, which include shop tills to extend their understanding of numbers. They enjoy pretending to add items and prices together on the shop till. In addition they enjoy making bread in the cooking area.

Children are confident, independent and have good self-esteem. This is because staff give children time to settle into the setting at their own pace. For example, staff use visual diary to show what activities have been set out to play with. This means children quickly settle to play and are motivated to learn. Children thoroughly enjoy constructing a train track and chat happily as the train move along the track making train noises. Children's own curiosity as learners are developed because staff use resources appropriately to engage their interest, for example, natural resources, like potatoes and carrots, alongside garden magazines are used in the farm shop. Children help to tidy away and staff offer encouragement and praise at all times. This means children work effectively together to put equipment like play mats away. They concentrate well during a range of play opportunities, which include well known routines, such as, snack times. Children move confidently, with good control and co-ordination while riding bicycles. They show an awareness of space both for themselves and others, for example, whilst lining up in a straight line after lunch to move from one room to another.

There are systems in place to monitor teaching methods and practice. However, some opportunities to fully extend all children's learning are not fully extended. As a result, children do not have consistent opportunities to extend their own learning and understand the importance of keeping themselves and others safe. For example, retuning bicycles to the designated area to ensure all children can play safely. In addition, the opportunity to extend their own skills and help others, for example putting on aprons and washing hands effectively. Staff meet regularly to plan and discuss children's progress. These plans are regularly revised and reviewed to ensure they are a working tool for all staff. Staff have a good knowledge of the children's starting points, because they discuss them with parents prior to children starting. They carry out assessments and observations to find out children's developmental range and likes and dislikes. Children's achievements and developments are monitored appropriately and transition records are used to inform parents and the next school of children's progress and targets.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children are confident, secure and have very good relationships with staff and with each other. They share popular resources very well, for example, using an egg timer to negotiate whose turn it is to play on the favourite bicycle. They confidently say 'hello' and are polite during large group activities like registration times. They show care and consideration for their peers by gently patting them on the back and offering praise to each other. Children learn about cultural diversity in meaningful ways, for example, by playing with resources that reflect positive images of the world around them.

There is an excellent system in place to support children with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. This means that very effective support is accessed for children at an incredibly early stage, which is helping children to reach their expected milestones. Children's sense of belonging is actively encouraged. Resources are very effectively used, for example, a visual diary board helps children to very quickly develop a sense of belonging to the setting. This means children settle exceptionally well and ensures that they make their own decisions regarding activities. They are very patient when waiting to start an eagerly anticipated activity, and laugh with joy when they mix flour and water together while making bread. Tidy-up time is conducted with control and teamwork, for example, children carry between them carefully a play mat and put it away together. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is extremely good. The pre-school have clear expectations of behaviour, which children understand. This means even new children settle extremely quickly into the pre-school routine and respond to the high praise given to them by staff. Children are seen supporting new children to settle with gentle pats on the back and praise for their achievements.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The very good relationships that staff share, with both the children and their parents, result in children's individual care needs being very quickly identified and met. This is because staff meet regularly with parents to discuss children's progress. In addition, parents complete a first profile about their Children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes and all necessary consents and documentation is in place to ensure continuity of care. Children benefit from the very warm welcome that is extended to their parents. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning, for example, there is an open door policy at the pre-school and parents clearly feel able to talk to staff about their child at any time. Children's individual care needs are fully met as a result of the consent forms and

records that parents are required to complete. This effective partnership has a positive impact on the education and care of the children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provision is good. The pre-school is run by a dedicated and committed staff team and committee members who have clear aims and objectives. They meet regularly to plan and discuss children progress and recognise that at certain times of the year, for example, the beginning of September, they need to meet more frequently. This means that children settle very quickly into the pre-school and swiftly develop an understanding of the pre-school's routines. Planning is seen as important and flexible for both staff and children, this means children's interest is maintained through the well planned themes and activities. Staff demonstrate a desire to continue to develop their practice and regularly attend training with the support of the pre-school committee. Training includes, the Birth to three matters framework, and as a result staff are developing a good knowledge and understanding of how to implement this with children aged under three. Children benefit from staff who are qualified and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The care and nursery education provided to the children and families within this setting is monitored appropriately.

The pre-school ensures that all legal requirements are met and policies and procedures are in place to underpin the effective running of the pre-school. There is a clear complaints policy in place and staff are aware that a record must be kept of any complaints made, detailing any action taken. However, this process is not included in their written procedures and policies. Parents are provided with clear information about the pre-school. Space within the pre-school is used very well and staff maintain safety by ensuring supervision at all times. There are suitable systems in place to ensure all staff working with children complete the required vetting procedures. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to inform Ofsted promptly of persons connected to the setting, such as, new committee members. There are now suitable systems in place, which includes clear vetting procedures. In addition the pre-school was asked to consider developing ways of providing increased opportunities for children to make marks and write during their free play. There are now ample opportunities, during play activities like role play, for children to make marks freely, for example, by making a shopping list.

## **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.

## 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

#### The quality and standards of the care

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

- develop written information regarding keeping a record of complaints and action taken

#### 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):

- develop ways to ensure meaningful situations are used consistently to enable children to understand the importance of keeping themselves and others, safe and healthy.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)