

# St Michael and All Angels Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 119526

**Inspection date** 15 October 2007

**Inspector** Lisa Paisley

**Setting Address** St Michael and All Angels Pre-School, 62 Leigh Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 1LF

**Telephone number** 01702 716998 mobile: 07913 516 838

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**Registered person** St Michael & All Angels 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](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 Michael and All Angels Pre-school is run by St Michael and All Angels Pre-school Committee. It opened in 1987 and operates from a large hall and smaller room within church premises in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. A maximum of 31 children may attend the setting at any one time. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:45 and 12:45 until 15:15 Monday to Friday with the exception of Thursday afternoons when the pre-school is closed. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these 36 children receive funding for nursery education. Children mainly come from a local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 12 staff. Six of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Eight staff are currently attending training. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment that is clean, effectively maintained and well ventilated. They learn about good personal hygiene through well-established daily routines, such as washing their hands after creative activities and before snack time and they are reminded to wipe their noses when needed. They are encouraged to sing the hand washing song before snack time, ensuring positive messages about hygiene is consistently passed onto the children. They have access to hot and cold water, liquid and tablet soap, and paper hand towels minimising the potential risk of cross-infection. A comprehensive range of clearly written policies and procedures are in place. Documentation in relation to children's health, for example, medical details, emergency contacts and children's dietary requirements are obtained and stored appropriately. Over half of the staff are first aid trained and a first aid box with all the required items are in place and is accessible to the staff. This ensures children receive very good care and attendance in the event of an accident or administering medication.

All children enjoy regular opportunities to engage in physical activities and they have access to a range of outdoor play equipment to support their whole body movements. For example, children confidently use tricycles, scooters, wobbly boards and the caterpillar tunnel. Children use a wide range of tools and equipment to promote their finer manipulative skills, such as scissors, puzzles and threading activities. As a result, children are making very good progress in all aspects of their physical development and their skills are appropriately challenged.

A good variety of healthy and nutritious snacks are offered to the children and snack time is a social occasion, which the children enjoy. Fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the session and children are able to help themselves independently, ensuring that they remain hydrated. Children display enthusiasm in making choices from the different fresh foods available including bananas, dried raisins, cereals, apples and toast. As a result, children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet. Staff maintain good written records for each child to ensure their individual health and dietary requirements are met. Consequently snacks that are offered are suitable for the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. All areas of the pre-school are formally risk assessed by the staff so that any potential hazards to children can be identified and appropriate action is taken to either minimise or remove the hazard. Staff also carry out daily checks of the areas used by children, ensuring each play area is safe before children arrive. For example, all radiators and low-level sockets are protected, the kitchen is inaccessible to children and all fire equipment is checked and in working order. There are clear and effective procedures for the arrival and departure of children, ensuring all children arrive and leave the premises safely. Fire evacuation procedures are in place ensuring children and staff know how to evacuate the building quickly and all visitors are informed of the fire drill procedure. As a result all persons in the building during the session know how to exit the building in the event of an incident and or emergency. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as staff provide consistent, gentle reminders such as tidying away toys, using play equipment appropriately and walking around the premises safely.

Staff have very good awareness of how to organise space, furniture and equipment effectively, enabling children to move freely with independence around activities and different play areas. As a result, children feel confident within the pre-school and are safe and secure. Children benefit from using a very good range of toys and play equipment which are maintained to a high standard. Children self-select their own play resources which are appropriate to their ages and stages of development, fostering choice and independence.

Children are effectively protected by staff that have a very good awareness of child protection procedures and know how to put these into practice to safeguard children's welfare. A written policy is in place and staff are able to recognise signs of abuse and know whom to contact if they are concerned about a child in their care. A named staff member is responsible for child protection and they have a clear understanding of their role through attending training and keeping up to date with any changes, such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. Parents are informed of the group's responsibility regarding child protection, reassuring parents of their child's welfare.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school and are happy and very settled due to staff relating to them sensitively and providing a wide range of activities which are interesting and stimulating. Staff know the children well, they greet them warmly on arrival at the pre-school, which makes them feel safe and secure. Routines provide opportunities for children to socialise with each other on a regular basis. Staff set out a range of activities, toys and equipment for the children, which enable them to make choices and extend their own play.

The staff have successfully implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework improving outcomes for the younger children attending the pre-school. Children are encouraged to take the lead in selecting activities and staff support this by encouraging children to explore and investigate toys and resources, all the time talking to them and asking questions to help them with the development of language and communication skills.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage, early childhood development and how children learn. Activity plans are comprehensive and very detailed, covering all the required elements of the curriculum, including differentiation and assessments of activities. A key worker system is in place and initial profiles on children are completed, helping staff assess children's starting points in their development. The pre-school use Southend's individual profiles to record children's developmental progress and staff consistently observe, monitor and record children's development. Focus activity plans have been effectively implemented, providing staff with clear information with regard to the learning intentions of activities. Circle time activities are effectively planned as staff use a range of props successfully to capture and maintain children's attention, for example, treasure bags. Sessions are effectively structured and planned, providing children with very positive learning experiences in an environment that is purposeful and calm.

Children are developing positive dispositions and attitudes towards their learning and they all work hard at completing self-chosen tasks. They are keen to participate in the range of activities provided and are encouraged to independently select resources and initiate their own activities and games. Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet staff and each other upon

arrival. They work well together and understand the importance of co-operation during group activities. For example, working at the writing table and sharing the equipment. They are confident and skilled speakers, using words effectively and a wide vocabulary to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. They listen attentively to each other and join in enthusiastically during group story times. The book corner is warm and inviting for children where they can sit in small groups with their peers and the staff looking at and talking about stories. Children particularly enjoyed the story book 'Stomp, chop, big roars! here come the dinosaurs' and 'Going on a bear hunt' where they made movements of going under, over and through the snow storm. They are beginning to learn about different rhymes and poems such as 'The ning, nang nong', linking letters and sounds. Children confidently use tools and resources to make marks and older, more able children are able to write their own names independently. They are making good progress in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy as they confidently use numbers when counting and solving simple number operations, such as addition and subtraction. Cooking, sand and water activities provide good practical experiences to explore different mathematical concepts such as capacity, weight and measures and they use appropriate language to describe and compare size and shape.

Children have excellent opportunities to find out about the natural world and they enjoy exploring their environment, for example, growing plants, trips out to the beach and local fire station. Children talk with interest about their own lives and learn about the work of people in the community, for example, the local police officer, Essex Wildlife Trust and the local football team. They are developing very good awareness of the uses of information technology in everyday life and are able to operate equipment such as the computer, battery operated toys and domestic items. Children's imaginations and free expression are effectively promoted, they particularly enjoy music and movement sessions where they are encouraged to use their imaginations. Role play is successfully linked into current topic work creating a good range of imaginary experiences for children, for example, underwater world of mermaids, treasure chests and sea creatures. They have good opportunities to participate in a range of creative activities such as painting, sand, gluing, play dough and cornflour. Children's physical skills are well promoted through a variety of mediums, such as hoops, climbing frame, tricycles and scooters. However, the outdoor play area is not used to its full potential, limiting children's opportunity to explore the outdoor area during the winter months. They use small-scale equipment such as paint brushes, pencils, crayons and play dough tools safely and with increasing control. Consequently, they are making good progress in all areas of their physical development.

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

The provision is good.

Children are valued as individuals and are able to make choices and decisions while at the pre-school. They develop confidence, self-esteem and respect for others. Children become aware of the wider society as they celebrate festivals and traditions from around the world. For example, Diwali, Eid, Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter. A selection of books and play equipment portray positive images of diversity and encourage children to feel good about themselves and show respect for others. However, this is not fully developed to further extend children's experiences of diversity. Good systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and whom have English as an additional language. The designated special needs coordinator (SENCO) has attended relevant training, they have a positive attitude and good practical experience of supporting children with learning difficulties. As a result, all children's needs are met and an inclusive environment is provided for all children.

Children settle quickly at the pre-school as staff work well with parents to ensure children's individual needs are met. Staff obtain information from parents before a child starts at the pre-school regarding their interests and abilities. This enables them to build on and develop children's previous knowledge, understanding and skills. Children are consistently very well behaved and they have a very strong sense of caring for others, which is strongly promoted by staff. Children are well supported by staff who regularly use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem. They learn to share play equipment and take turns and increasingly take responsibility for their own actions. Children have a very good sense of self-control through the positive role models that staff provide. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the very good relationships that the staff have developed with all the parents. They are actively involved in their children's learning, for example, formal meetings with the parent to discuss children's developmental progress. Staff always listen and value parents' ideas, contributions and concerns. Regular newsletters are sent out to parents informing them of future events and topic work and children are encouraged to bring in items from home. A parents notice board provides parents with all the required information about the pre-school, including the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, ensuring parents are fully informed with regard to their child's developmental progress, topic work and any events or celebrations.

Parents are aware of how to make complaints about the provision and these are dealt with in a prompt and professional way. Staff listen to parents' concerns and, where appropriate, adapt their policies and procedures accordingly.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are provided with a very good level of care, supported and enhanced by the clear policies developed and implemented by the pre-school. These ensure that staff are consistent in their interactions with children and in their regard for safety and security. Records and details relating to staff and children are obtained, recorded and stored appropriately, ensuring that the pre-school continues to meet all the legal requirements relating to the National Standards.

Children are cared for by staff who have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and who have undergone a recruitment and induction programme. This ensures that all staff working with children are suitable and have relevant training and experience.

The use of available space within the pre-school is effectively organised, with clear designated areas for play, storage, food preparation, changing and eating. These areas are effectively managed by staff to allow children to play, eat and rest safely and securely.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The manager has recently taken over the role and she has been successful in managing a smooth transition for all children, families and staff. All the staff, including managers, are enthusiastic, highly motivated, committed and professional in their approach to providing children with positive early years play experiences and learning. They have a very good understanding of the importance of early childhood development and they work hard to consistently provide good care for all children. Staff have clearly identified roles and responsibilities and designated tasks during the session and they carry out their roles effectively. Staff induction and appraisals ensure that new and existing staff feel fully supported and valued in their role. Consequently, there is very good

staff morale and commitment to the pre-school. They are deployed successfully within the pre-school and good staffing ratios are maintained thorough the day ensuring children are well supervised and supported during activities. Staff have an excellent awareness of the policies and procedures which are in place. Consequently, children are cared for by professional, knowledgeable, experienced staff and they benefit from excellent continuity of care.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provision agreed to ensure the incoming committee complete the relevant forms for Ofsted and undergo the necessary checks. The group have completed relevant forms for Ofsted to ensure appropriate checks are undertaken ensuring secure improvements with regard to safeguarding children.

At the last education inspection there were no significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to the following: consider altering the height of the computer so that it is easier for children to use. The pre-school have purchased a new computer and are looking at ways of adjusting the furniture to ensure that it is more accessible to children.

### **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 further resources, activities and play experiences to reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability.

#### **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 further the outdoor play area to ensure children can access all year round.

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)