

St Michaels Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	509277
Inspection date	15/10/2008
Inspector	Sheena Bankier
Setting address	St Michaels Hall, Routh Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4NY
Telephone number	01189 429 391 or 07738 550955
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

St. Michael's Pre-School is located in the church hall of St. Michael's Church which is in Tilehurst. The pre-school has the use of the main hall, side rooms and a large enclosed outdoor area. The pre-school opened in 1965. Children who attend the setting live in the local and surrounding area.

St. Michael's pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register for up to 30 children between the ages of rising three and five years old. There are currently 37 children on roll including funded three and four year olds. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. The pre-school is open during term time, Monday to Friday between 9.15 to 12.15 and offers a lunch club for 24 children from 12.15 to 13.15.

A total of eight members of staff are employed to work with the children. Of these, four staff currently hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three members of staff are working towards qualifications. A member of staff is employed for setting up the pre-school in the mornings.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Staff are developing their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Systems are evolving to support children's learning and development, for example, planning for individual children's progress. Staff have undertaken regular training. This develops their practice, which benefits the children at the setting. Some requirements of the EYFS are not in place. The setting does not hold details of the committee members. Ofsted holds no information of the individuals and their roles of those serving on the committee. As a result, no suitability checks are in place for the committee members.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure hygiene procedures are appropriate
- ensure risk assessments are in place for any local outings undertaken
- develop systems to ensure children's whereabouts is always known
- ensure appropriate behaviour management strategies and boundaries are consistently promoted
- develop the learning environment for children in regard to independent skills and ensure it is inviting and resources easily accessible
- promote and develop children's personal social and emotional development at snack time and increase their independent skills
- ensure children's development is recorded in sufficient detail against the development and learning outcomes of the Early Years Foundation Stage. (EYFS).

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- provide Ofsted with the details of all committee members and ensure suitability checks are undertaken for them (Suitable People) 07/11/2008
- maintain a record of all members of the committee at the pre-school. (Documentation) 07/11/2008

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school understands the strengths of its provision well. The setting has appropriately used the self-evaluation form. This pre-school has identified some areas for improvement. Staff show good commitment to their development, for example, through undertaking appraisals and training. Appropriate recruitment procedures and suitability checks are in place for staff. Staff work well as a team. Clear policies and procedures are in place for the pre-school and reviewed annually. However, staff do not always promote these in their practice. As a result, hygiene routines are not always appropriate and behaviour management strategies and boundaries are at times inconsistent.

Staff know the children well as individuals and have put the key person approach in place. Children's care needs are known and staff meet these well. Good communication is in place with parents. This results in good partnerships, which contribute to continuity and consistency in meeting the children's needs. Staff identify children's learning and development needs, such as, more and less able children. This enables staff to provide suitable challenge and support to these children. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good support. Individual education plans are in place and one to one support is in place where needed. This promotes children's development and progress.

Children's welfare is safeguarded. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to protect children from abuse and neglect. They are able to recognise potential signs and symptoms. Staff understand and know how to appropriately respond to any concerns that arise. A thorough risk assessment is in place for the premises and daily checks are undertaken. Safe departure systems are in place. This ensures children are only collected by authorised adults. This promotes children's safety at the premises. Although local outings are rarely undertaken with the children and there are no risk assessments in place for these. Staff occasionally are not aware of where children are, for example, it was observed at the inspection when staff were organising children to go outside that a small number of children were left in the main hall unseen for a short length of time. This puts children's safety at potential risk.

Staff provide a warm and friendly environment to the children and parents. There are notice boards in place to provide information to parents. Display boards at the pre-school are not always effectively used to offer an inviting environment, for example, at the time of the inspection there was little children's artwork displayed.

Staff do not always replace items that promote children's learning and development, such as, laminated number cards on the ride on toys. The book corner is comfortable with child size soft furnishings, however, the majority of the books are in a plastic box which does not make them easily accessible to children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are happy, settled and confident at the pre-school. They enjoy good relationships with their peers and the staff. Children benefit from and enjoy a good variety of activities and play experiences. These are set out in the hall and cover all the areas of learning. This enables children to make choices from the activities and resources on offer. Their key person and other staff support new children, for example, they receive reassurance and one to one care when needed. This helps them to feel secure at the setting.

A balance of adult led and child initiated activities are in place. Age and stage of development groups are organised for some group adult led activities. This ensures the activities are age and stage appropriate for the children. Children develop understanding and recognition at these times of letters, numbers and colours. Children listen and concentrate well overall at these times. Staff also spend individual time with children, for example, at the drawing table. Children are encouraged by staff to practise their emergent writing either free hand or by tracing over dots. A self-registration system is in place. This encourages the children to recognise their names, although no picture is included on the card. For the younger and less able children this would provide additional support in recognising their card. Staff encourage children's understanding of numbers at different activities, for example, the children and staff count together as they make dough candles for a 'cake'.

Children's behaviour is mostly good. They are familiar with the routines of the pre-school and most children enjoy helping to tidy up. Staff provide praise and encouragement to children which supports and develops their self-esteem and confidence. Staff manage inappropriate behaviour calmly and provide clear explanations to children. However, at times staff do not use appropriate strategies or promote boundaries with children, for example, children run up and down the slide which puts them and other children at risk of harm, although staff do not intervene. Children develop some independent skills, although at snack time, children rarely help in the preparation of snack or pour their own drinks. As a result, children do not develop their physical skills or confidence in this area.

Staff plan flexibly for the children's learning and development. They meet weekly to discuss the planned curriculum. Staff are beginning to use their understanding of the EYFS and knowledge of the individual children when planning activities and experiences. Therefore, children's individual development is starting to be considered and planned for. Staff monitor and observe children's development on an on going basis and make regular written observations. At the time of the inspection, children's individual records of development were not linked clearly to the EYFS, as they were waiting for a format to be available for this purpose.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	Satisfactory
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	Satisfactory
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	Good

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	Satisfactory
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	Good
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	Good
How well are children safeguarded?	Satisfactory

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	Satisfactory
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped to stay safe?	Good
How well are children helped to be healthy?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	Good
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	Satisfactory
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	Satisfactory

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.