

St. Mary's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	143101
Inspection date	02/12/2008
Inspector	Janet Armstrong
Setting address	Lysander Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2BU
Telephone number	07906 674310
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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 Mary's Pre-school is a committee run group which has been operating since the 1970s. It is situated in the main hall of Holy Trinity Community Centre in the town of Yeovil, Somerset. The pre-school provides sessional care for up to 26 children from age two to under five years. They are open term time only on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.30 to 12.15.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 30 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The pre-school is in receipt of the government funding for early education. They cater for children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The accommodation is set out on the same level with no steps restricting access to the premises. It offers use of a spacious hall with toilets, a kitchen and store room. There is an enclosed play area to the side of the hall.

The pre-school employs two qualified play leaders who hold NVQ level 3 in childcare and education. They are supported by four members of staff, of whom three hold a recognised childcare qualification and one who will be working towards one. They are supported by relief staff and volunteers.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The welfare requirements and outcomes for children are appropriately met. The children are happy and settle easily into the sessions through trusting relationships they have formed with staff, who are helping them to develop a sense of security and belonging. The hall is set up each day by staff to offer children a range of activities that allows some opportunities for self-initiated play, although these are not maximised to ensure that each child's individual learning needs are fully extended. Current systems for self-evaluation are not successfully allowing management to start addressing areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide increased opportunities for children to make choices and direct their own play
- ensure all children are sufficiently engaged and challenged throughout the session
- develop self-evaluation systems to monitor strengths and identify and address weaknesses and areas for improvement
- improve the planning and assessment systems to enable staff to identify and build on the children's next steps so that they are able to extend and challenge the children's learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

All the necessary written policies and procedures are in place and used appropriately to work with parents, although many of these are in need of updating, which management is starting to address. There are positive systems in place for working in partnership with parents. For example, an induction system enables new parents and their children to introduce themselves to the setting and staff. Parents provide the setting with a detailed written profile that enables them to share what they know about their children. Regular discussions and opportunities to meet with their child's key person keeps parents up-to-date about the progress their children are making. However, there are no systems in place that enable management to work with other settings that children attend to provide continuity and extension in their learning.

Management follow robust recruitment and vetting processes and appropriate monitoring procedures to confirm the suitability of the staff they employ. Risk assessments and staff's awareness of potential hazards are effective in ensuring children are kept safe. However, the systems for management to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the setting are informal and do not enable them to successfully address any weaknesses they have discussed and build on some of the good practice in place. This also means that some of the recommendations raised at the last inspection have not been successfully addressed. The effectiveness of the planning to promote children's learning is not evaluated to enable management to build on the success of some of the activities provided and address any weaknesses. This means that staff do not always effectively challenge and extend the children's learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's welfare is promoted satisfactorily with some positive procedures in place with regard to children's health and safety. For example, children are reminded not to run indoors and consider, with support from staff, the impact and potential danger of this on themselves and others. The children enjoy physical play opportunities and use ride on toys with good control and coordination, using the pedals to propel themselves. They enjoy the healthy snacks provided for them by their parents and are learning to take care of some of their own needs independently, such as using the toilet and accessing tissues to wipe their own nose.

Children are confident in their environment. They select from the activities set up for them each day by staff. Whilst planning ensures that different activities are put out each day, there is a lack of opportunities for children to make independent choices, direct their own play and have their learning and understanding fully challenged by the activities and staff. Not all children are fully engaged or focused in all of the activities offered, which means at times during the sessions, some of them are not involved in meaningful play and some become disruptive, especially when routines change. For example, the adult-led craft activity does not enable children to use their imagination and express themselves creatively, a lack of

access to some resources, for example, at the mark making table, means that children are not able to build on and practise their developing writing skills.

Children speak confidently to communicate and share their thoughts, needs and ideas. They enjoy books on a one-to-one basis with staff as well as in groups, where they are learning to recognise and enjoy the information that books can give them. Children use their imagination well in the role play area and receive positive levels of support and encouragement from staff in this area. For example, when the role play area is turned into a shop, staff effectively promote children's counting and number problem solving skills using money. This means that children are learning the use and value of counting and money. In the home corner, boys become actively engaged and focused on caring for their babies, dressing them and putting them to bed making good use of the range of resources available to them.

Children's records of assessment successfully show the progress children are making through the stepping stones within the six areas of learning. These are supported by written observations, photographs and evidence of the children's work. However, along with planning, they do not identify the children's next steps in their learning. This means that whilst staff work well together as a team, sharing tasks and responsibilities to help the sessions run smoothly, they are not able to effectively build on the children's current level of learning to extend and challenge and take it to the next step.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is 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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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.