

# St Martins Pre school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	127602
<b>Inspection date</b>	10/07/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	Liz Margaret Caluori
<b>Setting address</b>	St. Martins Church Hall, Northumberland Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7LP
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<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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 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 Martins Playgroup has been operating since 1971 and has held its current registration since 2001. The group operates from a church hall in Shepway, Maidstone. The single storey building is used solely by the group whilst in operation. Children use the main hall and have access to two separate toilets on either side and a fully enclosed garden. Staff have use of a separate kitchen.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register and is able to care for 24 children from two to five years at any one time and currently has 40 children on roll. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting operates on a sessional basis, opening at 9:00 and closing at either 11:30 or 15:00 depending on the day.

There are currently six staff members working directly with the children, all of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority advisors.

## Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. The highly motivated, well trained staff team provide a stimulating environment in which children learn and play safely and with enthusiasm. They make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of the careful planning to meet their individual needs. Robust and ongoing self-evaluation and monitoring ensures that the service is reactive to the needs of its users and is constantly striving to improve. Children also gain great benefit from the effective partnership between the staff and their parents, carers and other professionals involved in the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider reviewing the records relating to accidents which occur when the child is not at the pre-school to include greater detail
- consider ways in which to give children greater opportunities to select resources for themselves in order to allow them to build on their interests and learning

## The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and staff team are highly motivated and work extremely well together to create a stimulating, warm and wonderfully child centred environment. A tremendous commitment to training and development ensures that staff have a

thorough understanding of the requirements of the EYFS. Clear and effective systems are in place to ensure consistent working practices which are thoughtfully devised to reflect the needs of the children who attend. The setting has a strong capacity for continual improvement, demonstrating a commitment to self-evaluation and reflection. This supports the manager and staff team to identify areas they wish to improve and to prioritise these effectively.

Exceptionally robust arrangements are in place to foster and maintain good relationships with parents and carers. Staff provide a very good range of information about the aims and objectives of the setting and the way in which the EYFS is supported. This information is presented in a range of ways in order to make it accessible to everyone. This inclusive practice ensures that all parents are well placed to understand how their children are learning. In addition, regular communication with their child's key person ensures that parents and carers are able to contribute observations from home which can be used to monitor children's progress and to plan for their next steps. The setting also has effective procedures in place to work in partnership with other professionals involved in delivering the EYFS. This helps to ensure that children's individual needs are fully recognised and transitions are managed effectively.

Children are protected by the comprehensive policies and procedures in place to promote their safety. In addition, risk assessments are undertaken and written records are maintained. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to be relevant. The environment has been organised to allow children a good level of independence as they can move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas for large parts of the day. However, staff are extremely vigilant in their supervision and ensure that children are playing safely. Child protection procedures are entirely appropriate. Staff have attended training and are very clear on their responsibility to reports any concerns about children's welfare.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children are extremely happy and settled as they play with their friends and chat happily with staff. The atmosphere within the group is very positive, warm and inspiring. Children are making extremely good progress in all areas of their learning as a result of the high level of support they receive from staff. The systems for assessing and monitoring children's progress are highly effective. Sensitive observations of the children support staff to plan activities which are appropriate to their individual needs and which offer a good level of challenge.

Children are developing excellent speaking and listening skills and are confident to express their opinions and contribute in group discussions. They also enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Pencils and other mark-making tools are set out each day for children to select as part of their free play. In addition, there are some adult led activities planned to place greater emphasis on specific skills, such as letter recognition, counting, sorting and matching. These are very competently delivered and are effective in capturing children's interests and supporting them to develop good concentration skills.

Children confidently choose from a very broad and interesting range of activities set out both in the group room and in the outdoor area. The storage arrangements make it difficult for children to access additional resources freely. For example, staff ensure that there are toys for imaginative play set out each session but these may not always include the dressing up clothes. Children who wish to dress up are free to ask for additional items and staff are very prompt to respond to their requests. Whilst being slightly restrictive of their creativity, the impact of this is minimised by the prompt response of staff to their requests.

Children receive very good support to learn how to keep themselves safe. They move very sensibly around the setting and understand the 'garden rules'. They learn about 'stranger danger', road safety and also enjoy visits from representatives from the fire service and the police force.

Excellent consideration is given to teaching children about the importance of good hygiene and healthy lifestyles. They are developing a good level of independence in their toileting and routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They have visits from the dental hygienists and also learn about their own bodies by recording and monitoring their height and weight to see how they grow. Children enjoy nutritious snacks of fruit and are given good encouragement to try new foods. Those who bring in especially healthy lunch boxes are also rewarded with stickers. Drinks are constantly available and children are given extra encouragement to take a drink after physical activity.

The setting's procedures for dealing with accidents are entirely appropriate as first aid trained staff are present at all times. Appropriate written records are maintained of all accidents which occur in the setting, but accidents which occur at home are not routinely recorded in detail.

The manager and staff team are highly committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and inclusive practice. Full consideration is given to identifying the needs of not only the children but also their family. The environment is very welcoming and great effort is given to supporting children who speak English as an additional language.

Children have access to a range of programmable toys which support them to develop ICT skills which will help them in later life. Their future economic well-being is further promoted by the support they receive to develop independence in their self-care and social skills. They are confident and exceptionally well mannered and considerate.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

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

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
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?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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