

St. Mary's Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

219115

Inspection date

24/02/2009

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Setting address

St. Mary's Church Hall, St. Mary's Road, Wootton, Bedford,
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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 managed by a voluntary committee, in partnership with St Mary's Church. It opened in 1967 and operates from two main rooms in St Mary's Church Hall in the village of Wootton, Bedfordshire. A slope to the main entrance means that the premises are accessible. Children have access to the fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The setting receives funding for early education. It is open each weekday during term-time only and sessions are from 09.15 to 11.45. In the spring and summer terms it is also open on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 12.45 to 15.15. This reduces to Tuesday and Friday afternoons for the autumn term. There is a lunch club on Wednesday, from 11.45 to 12.45. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 32 places and there are currently 39 children attending who are within this age group. Most of the children live locally. A small number of children attend other settings such as local nurseries, pre-schools and childminders.

There are five staff members. Of these, four hold relevant childcare qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. The sensitive procedures to ensure all children are included and their individual needs are reflected in the everyday planning, are a particular strength of the setting. Staff build secure relationships with children and their confident, flexible approach means that children are consistently offered a range of opportunities that promote their individual development. The manager works together with staff to review their practice, effectively identifying strengths and areas for improvement. There are appropriate plans to continue improving the practice of the setting and therefore ensure that they continue to respond to the needs of the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide further opportunities for children to use outdoor areas
- ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are easily accessible to parents.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff actively seek feedback from parents and carers and include this in their procedures for evaluating daily practice and developing action plans. They maintain a positive approach to feedback, taking action to address identified weaknesses and thus improve the outcomes for children. Recent improvements

include the introduction of a lunch club and the extension of the assessment procedures to ensure that children's current developmental needs are fed into the daily activity planning.

The setting's practical policies support the efficient daily running of the group and help to ensure that children are consistently offered a secure and welcoming environment. Good staff knowledge and thorough procedures relating to safeguarding children ensure that their welfare is promoted and they are well protected at all times. For example, there are robust procedures for checking that staff are suitable to work with children. Comprehensive risk assessments for all areas ensure that hazards are minimised or removed. Ongoing explanations from staff help children to gain a clear understanding of safety issues, such as the relevance of not running inside.

The setting works well with parents and carers and ensures that there is a thorough exchange of information, which is used to promote children's learning and development. Parents and carers are kept well informed of their children's activities and progress through regular discussions with staff, written reports, newsletters and meetings with key workers. However, parents and carers are not fully informed as they do not have easy access to the setting's policies. Good links are maintained with other settings, such as the local school, helping to ensure that children's care is consistent and their development promoted.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are offered a wide range of interesting activities and opportunities that enable them to make good progress in all areas of learning and development. Information is obtained from parents and carers about children's abilities and preferences. This is used to inform initial assessments, to monitor children's progress and inform activity planning. Children are relaxed and confident in their choice of activities because staff make sure that the planning allows plenty of time and space for them to explore and complete their chosen activities. For example, staff note that the construction set is popular and so ensure that there is plenty of space for children to explore this; a group of children become thoroughly engrossed in this activity, working together to build models, proudly showing these to staff and discussing the various functions of the cranes they have made.

Children are encouraged to think critically and solve problems. For example children playing with a garage work out which cars are the right size to fit down the slope, discussing concepts such as 'bigger, smaller and too big'. All children are gently supported to join in the activities and routines. An example of this is a music session, where staff make sure that all children have an instrument, supporting the children who are less confident to take their turn. Children thoroughly enjoy this activity and are obviously proud of themselves as they take turns to play their instrument in time to the song. This ongoing support and encouragement offers children the reassurance to express their ideas, explore further and share their thoughts.

Staff use creative methods to help children understand and to reinforce their

learning. For example, children enjoy an activity where they identify different shapes, singing songs about these, counting the number of sides, comparing the sizes and naming the colours as staff members hold up large, wooden, shape-characters. The attractive environment and easily accessible resources encourage children to explore and extend their play. This is further promoted as staff play alongside them and encourage children to make the most of available resources. For example, staff and children work together to rearrange the chairs to make a train, introducing discussions about where the train is going and singing associated songs.

Children are gaining a good awareness of healthy eating and the relevance of this. They have participated in topic work to look at different fruits, made their own displays and cooked dishes such as vegetable soup. They are offered opportunities to develop and explore physical movements. For example, they enjoy an exercise session where they jump, run and pretend to be rockets, moving faster and slower and doing relaxation exercises at the end of the session as they discuss the effects of exercise on their bodies. Children enjoy using the outdoor play area, where they are able to access equipment such as ride-on toys, hoops and balls, slides and push-along toys. However, outdoor areas are not fully utilised to promote children's development.

Children are gaining a good understanding of the use of writing as a means of communication and recording. They make lists and pretend to take notes as part of their role-play. Alternative communication systems are also utilised to support children. For example, staff use Makaton sign language as an additional means of communication.

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? | 2 |
| How well does the provision promote inclusive practice? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement. | 2 |

Leadership and management

| | |
|---|---|
| How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed? | 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

| | |
|---|---|
| How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted? | 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 |

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.