

St Mary's Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY217236

Inspection date

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Inspector

Maura Pigram

Setting address

St. Marys Church, George Street, Watford, Hertfordshire,
WD18 0EG

Telephone number

01923 240368

Email

judith.ballard@live.co.uk

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 opened in 2002. It operates from one large hall in St Mary's Church Centre in central Watford and is run by a committee made up of church members, staff and parents. It is open Monday to Friday from 09.30 to 12.30 during term time. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. There is currently no provision for outside play available. Outings within the local community are arranged periodically. The premises are at ground level and are easily accessible. There is an adult disabled toilet available.

The pre-school is registered for no more than 24 children aged under five years at any one time. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. There are six members of staff, including the manager. Three members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff members are working towards a Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). The setting receives support from a local authority qualified teacher and has obtained the Hertfordshire Quality Assurance award.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff work very well together. Some speak a variety of languages such as Urdu and training for further development is encouraged and supported. However, planning and assessment do not always give consideration to children's interests and the next steps in their learning and development. Policies and procedures, such as risk assessments, do not always work in practice to promote children's welfare. The manager and her staff demonstrate a growing awareness of the needs of individual children and have worked together to identify strengths and areas for improvement with the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the settling-in process so that children and parents are encouraged to join in with manageable tasks that interest them
- ensure procedures to promote the good health of children are promoted and take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection - this refers to the sharing of wash bowls and the use of some products such as strawberry jam
- ensure information gathered from parents such as children's interests and needs are used to inform planning including the settling-in process, and ensure observations are used to plan the next steps in children's developmental progress
- review the organisation of the day so that children are offered effective challenges during adult-led activities and child-initiated play and ensure they are offered daily opportunities for outdoor play.

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

- conduct a risk assessment and identify aspects that need to be checked on a regular basis, maintain a record of this and review it regularly - this refers to the serving of hot drinks in the vicinity of children (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 03/04/2009
- make available to parents the details for contacting Ofsted (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare). 03/04/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and her mostly long-term team work hard to create an exciting and interesting environment, so that children are mainly motivated and interested to learn. The pre-school operates smoothly during the first session of the day, when staff members and volunteers are mostly well deployed. New children are adequately supported, however, occasionally the deployment of staff and the organisation of the day, such as the preparation for snack time, means that some children take longer to settle than necessary and some children's learning potential is missed.

The team work together to monitor and evaluate the provision, for example, team meetings are regularly held and staff discuss the children's participation in activities. Following this, they ensure improvements are made where necessary. A recent example is the introduction of physical play at the beginning of the session following observations, resulting in the identification of the need for robust play. Recommendations from the previous inspection have mostly been addressed satisfactorily. An exception to this is the complaints policy, which does not contain the regulators correct contact details should parents need to raise any concerns. Consequently, this is raised as an action for this inspection.

Records, policies and procedures are mostly appropriately maintained. Recruitment and vetting procedures are well organised and appraisal systems ensure training needs are identified and supported. In addition, in-house training, such as safeguarding, ensures staff are kept up to date with necessary information. However, risk assessments are less robust, thus some procedures pose a potential risk to children. The staff are warm and friendly to parents and carers, and positive steps are taken to introduce parents to each other. Information about the children's day is shared through a number of practices such as newsletters, a prospectus, open days, a parents' rota and the invitation to join the committee. The provision has developed links with other providers such as health visitors, a children's centre and teachers from the local nurseries and schools where children attend following their time at the pre-school. Thus, children are well supported in the transition from pre-school to nursery or school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children have the opportunity for uninterrupted play during the first half of the session. Most children settle easily to become active and engrossed in chosen activities, such as imaginative play, construction and painting. Staff work hard to create a bright and welcoming environment, resulting in children freely helping themselves to a wide range of toys and equipment to help them make some sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff members are kind and sympathetic towards newly arrived children. Distractions such as stories and sponge painting are offered with some success. However, the routine of the day does not always allow children to become totally involved in their play and concentrate for long periods. This sometimes leads to new children becoming unsettled. Observations taken whilst children play are informally used to plan for the next stage in children's learning. Effective procedures are in place to support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff know the children well, they are able to discuss individual children and the progress they are making. However, challenges are not always provided to older or more able children, thus learning opportunities are potentially under developed. Detailed information about interests and children's home languages is obtained from parents, although these are not consistently used to inform planning and to support children's welfare.

Children's physical development is appropriately supported through a range of activities such as mark-making, cooking and creating models from playdough. Large physical skills are supported through the provision of indoor activities, such as riding wheeled toys and climbing on suitable apparatus. Children are taken on occasional outings within the local community as there is no outdoor play area. Imaginative play is very well supported, with children enjoying mark-making whilst playing under a table. Effective support leads to children initiating an activity of kite making. During this time children learn how to operate a variety of tools including scissors and a hole punch. Older children maintain concentration and are confident in exploring new ideas; expressions from children include, 'look I show you, then you do it'. They keenly explore interactive toys, such as microphones and tape recorders. They can count easily and join in with games to support their mathematical understanding. Children's requests for resources, such as the African snails, are positively responded to and valuable time is spent discussing the creatures' habits.

Children's welfare is adequately promoted. Since the last inspection, staff have taken some steps to ensure the premises are safe and secure. For example, collection and arrival times are effectively managed and the main door has been fitted with a digital access system. Children learn how to play safely during activities, such as circle time, when puppets are skilfully used to reinforce messages about sharing and being kind to each other. In addition, children are reminded how to use resources, such as scissors, safely. However, the practice of drinking coffee in the vicinity of children means that the promotion of children's welfare and safety is inconsistent. Independent skills are encouraged. For example, children are encouraged to pour their own drinks and to spread cheese and jam on their bread at snack time. However, the use of the strawberry jam does not effectively promote the welfare of children's teeth. Tissues are easily available to

promote good hygiene practices, although other procedures, such as the sharing of a washing bowl to clean hands, do not effectively support good hygiene. Children mostly behave well and many children show care and kindness towards their peers. All children are encouraged to share and praise is continually provided so that they learn right from wrong.

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.	2

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?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

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?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
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 registration.

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.