

St Mary's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	143117
Inspection date	17/09/2009
Inspector	Elaine Douglas

Setting address	St Mary's Pre-School, St Mary's Church Rooms, Church Street, Ilchester, Somerset, BA22 8LW
Telephone number	01935 849452
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

St Mary's Pre-School opened approximately 40 years ago. It is a committee run group situated in a church hall in the centre of the village of Ilchester in Somerset. The pre-school has sole use of the premises. There is also a secure outside play area at the rear of the premises. Access to the building is via a step.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for 26 children aged from two years to the end of the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 12 children on roll. The pre-school is open five days a week during term time, from 09.00 to 12.00, with a lunch club from 12.00 to 13.00. Afternoon sessions operate from 13.00 until 15.30 depending on demand.

Three members of staff work with the children. The supervisor holds a level three early years qualification. One member of staff holds a level 2 and is working towards a level 3, and one holds a level 3 in playwork and is working towards a level 3 in early years. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Suitable systems have been put in place to identify actions for improvement and evaluate practice. The new planning and assessment system now identifies most children's individual learning needs, which means they make satisfactory progress in their learning and development, considering their starting points and abilities. Good procedures keep children safe and secure, and regular risk assessments identify most actions needed to limit potential hazards. Good communication with parents ensures no child is disadvantaged and their individual needs are met.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure all equipment is kept clean and well maintained to further protect children's health
- extend the use of Somerset Total Communication to further promote equal opportunities
- ensure the door to the garden does not pose a risk to children trapping their fingers
- include the parents' initial and ongoing contributions in the assessment files and monitor the planning to ensure each child's next steps are included

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Good systems are now in place to carry out checks on staff and the committee to ensure only suitable people are employed, and appraisals are used to identify any training needs. Good teamwork and communication amongst staff ensures they are well deployed to support and supervise children at all times. All staff receive first aid and child protection training, and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Children's files contain all relevant information to safeguard and promote their welfare, and are stored confidentially. Good risk assessments are now carried out on the premises and for each and every outing. However, the door to the garden is left open for children to enjoy free flow but it is not secured and poses a risk to children trapping their fingers on windy days.

Parents receive good information on the setting both verbally and in writing, and have regular opportunities to see their child's development file. Parents provide appropriate information to enable their child's welfare needs to be met and staff make themselves available daily to discuss any concerns. Children are valued and develop a sense of responsibility through making decisions and taking part in daily routines. Children new to the setting are sensitively supported in taking an active role and staff ensure that all children are included and listened to. No children currently attend other providers or agencies.

The setting is beginning to use self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement. They have sought advice and support from the local authority following their last inspection and have implemented several changes to improve outcomes for children. Staff evaluate the activities provided and continue to update their knowledge through training. All policies and procedures have been recently reviewed and updated, and all required documentation is in place. The premises and resources are satisfactorily maintained. However, some toys need cleaning, the lighting in the cloakroom is poor and the changing mat is torn and often stood on.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The new planning and assessment systems now identify the children's interests and their possible lines of development. This is used to plan their next steps linked to the early learning goals, however, this is not consistent yet. Staff observe children to know their starting points and discuss this with parents. However, this is not included in the assessment system and some children's observations have not been dated. Suitable use is made of the available space to ensure children can access resources which provide opportunities to develop in all areas.

Children are confident, and generally happy and well behaved while at the setting. Staff praise their achievements and intervene when arguments break out, supporting children in thinking of each other's feelings. Children are pleased to see each other on arrival and build good relationships with the staff; confidently asking

for their support when needed. They enjoy taking responsibility and all children have opportunities to be involved in the daily routines. For example, they help to set the table for snack and independently pour their own drinks. They are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water at any time and are reminded to have a drink after physical exercise. Poems are used to encourage good hand washing practices, and soap and paper towels are provided. Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks and are encouraged to eat their savoury foods first from their packed lunch. A free-flow system enables children to access the outside area on a daily basis, which promotes individual learning styles. A large range of physical play equipment promotes their development and plans are in place to extend the use of the garden to cover all areas of the curriculum.

Children have good opportunities to initiate their own activities and select from the resources. Daily adult led activities include singing and story time and walks around the village are used very effectively to promote children's all-round development. For example, they learn about their own community as they notice animals and birds, the postman, and people working in a garage and on houses. They identify aeroplanes, helicopters and different types of vehicles. Children learn about keeping themselves safe as they use a zebra crossing and keep hold of the adults' hands. Most children are confident communicators and enjoy making marks in their paintings, drawings and the available writing resources. Some staff have had training in using Somerset Total Communication to promote equal opportunities. However, it is only used when singing some songs. Children are confident in their use of technology and this is used to promote learning, such as counting, drawing and following instructions.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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