

St Michael's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	305327
Inspection date	24/11/2009
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott

Setting address	St Michael's Church, Devon Road, Chester, CH2 2PX
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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 Michael's Pre-School is owned and managed by a committee of church members. It registered in 1975 and operates from several rooms within St. Michael's church hall in Newton, Chester. There are two main groups, which accommodate the different age groups and abilities of children, as well as a large outside play area. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and serves the local area. It is registered for 52 children in the early years age group and there are currently 62 children between two and four years on roll in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The pre-school is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.30am until 12.00pm and in the summer months on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1.15pm until 3.45pm in term time only. The setting is accessible to all children and their parents. The setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There is a team of 10 staff including the manager, of whom nine hold a relevant early years qualification. The setting is supported by the local authority and an advisory teacher.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

Children generally appear happy as they play with a range of well kept resources. The effective deployment of staff ensures they receive attention; however, a failure to have and implement a number of regulatory policies and procedures, coupled with a weakness in understanding by staff, means children's welfare is compromised. Children with disabilities are well supported and inclusion is well promoted. Although many of the weaknesses are identified in the self-evaluation, failure to act on these weaknesses results in outcomes for children that are unsafe, and the setting's capacity to improve is limited.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- improve the written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents (Safeguarding and welfare) 24/11/2009
- obtain information about who has legal contact with the child; and who has parental responsibility for the child (Safeguarding and welfare) 24/11/2009

- carry out a full risk assessment before each outing which includes an assessment of required adult:child ratios and ensure the assessment is reviewed before embarking on each specific outing (Safeguarding and welfare) 24/11/2009
- write and implement an effective behaviour management policy which is adhered to by all members of staff (Safeguarding and welfare) 24/11/2009
- keep records of the information used to assess suitability of adults over 16, to demonstrate to Ofsted that checks have been done (Suitability of adults) 24/11/2009
- write and implement a clearly defined procedure for the emergency evacuation of the premises and ensure regular evacuation drills are carried out (Suitable premises, environment & equipment) 24/11/2009
- conduct a thorough risk assessment on all areas used by children and record it so that it includes information on who conducted it, the date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Suitable premises, environment & equipment). 24/11/2009

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure there is a no smoking policy
- ensure all practitioners have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding children issues and be able to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure appropriately
- provide positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities
- work together with other practitioners and parents to support transition between settings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of possible indicators of abuse or neglect but are not so confident about the procedures they should follow if they have a concern about a child. Children learn about keeping themselves safe through gentle reminders, such as not to run indoors. They are supervised well by staff during their play; however, they are not safe, as the risk assessment does not adequately identify all hazards and is not signed or reviewed regularly. For instance, there is a gap in the perimeter fencing in the outdoor area where a child could leave the premises unnoticed or an intruder could enter the outdoor area. There is evidence on site that most staff have undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks, but not for all staff. There is no record made of risk assessments undertaken before outings take place and no written procedure for emergency evacuation of the premises. Children do practice evacuation procedures but these are infrequent and therefore do not help them to learn to keep themselves safe in

an emergency. The staff do not have details of who has legal contact with the child or who has parental responsibility for the child. These are all serious breaches of regulations and put children at risk. Accident and medication records are appropriately maintained and help to promote children's well-being. Children's times of arrival and departure are monitored and staff ensure that the main entrance is locked during opening hours to prevent unauthorised access.

The staff use self-evaluation to identify their strengths and areas for development; however, the areas for development are not acted upon, so continuous improvement is not evident. Some of the recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed, improving some outcomes for children. Children now have access to water throughout the session, enabling them to form good habits for the future. Management have implemented a complaint log to record any complaints from parents. However, the log relates to the National Standards and not the EYFS. The complaint procedure lacks detail and does not fully explain the process to parents and carers. Ofsted is notified of changes in key roles and planning has also been improved. Some staff attend a variety of training courses to develop their knowledge and skills. These include EYFS in practice, support and communication, Makaton sign language and manual handling. This knowledge is used to improve outcomes for children. Other staff are improving their early years qualifications by attending National Vocational Qualification training.

Parents are pleased with the service they receive. They are provided with a pack of information when their child starts attending, which includes some of the policies and procedures. They know where they can access their child's progress records when they want and are given good verbal feedback each time their child attends. They are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning and are asked about what their child's interests are. They are given information about the topics covered and invited to help on the parent rota. They say that the setting is 'well organised' and they find the staff 'wonderful' and 'really know the children well individually'. The setting has established links with local schools but, as yet, links with others who provide EYFS are not established to help staff maintain consistency in children's learning.

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

Staff have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the EYFS and plan a balanced programme of activities for children. They observe children frequently and use these observations to assess their progress against the expectations of the Early Years Foundation Stage. These indicate that most children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Children are happy and feel valued because staff show that they enjoy their company, which builds self-esteem. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and dancing to the tunes. They play with puzzles and listen to a familiar story told by a member of staff. Older, more able children learn about road safety as they practise crossing the road with a real traffic light in the pre-school. They also use information and communication technology well to support their learning, such as operating a programme on the pre-school laptop computer. Letter and word recognition is developed as children

see print displayed all round the environment.

Children develop an understanding of mathematical concepts in everyday routines and spontaneous situations, as well as in focused activities. They learn about the cycle of living things as they plant and grow flowers in the church garden. They learn to control a ball and how to 'scoot' a scooter as well as enjoying ring games. All the skills learned are useful for their future development. Children learn about other cultures in their world as they celebrate festivals such as Diwali and Chinese New Year as well as Christmas and other Christian festivals. They raise money for those who are less fortunate in the world. Children who speak English as an additional language are given opportunities to use their home language during their play. Books are also provided in their home language. However, there are limited positive images of diversity displayed around the rooms. Staff provide good support for children with disabilities. They work well with other agencies to ensure that the children have all the support they need to reach their full potential. They make adaptations where necessary so that all children are included equally.

Children are encouraged in hygienic practices; for example, hand washing before snacks and after using the toilet. They are helped to learn about healthy eating as their snacks are nutritious and balanced; they have bread sticks, pitta bread, cheese and crackers with fresh fruit and milk or water. However, there is no policy about smoking on the premises. Children regularly play outside with a variety of equipment to develop balancing, coordination and climbing skills, and they have many opportunities each day to enjoy the fresh air. Children's behaviour is generally good as staff appropriately challenge issues as they arise; for example, helping them to think about how it may feel if they hurt someone. However, there is no behaviour management policy, which is a further breach of regulations.

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?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	4

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	4
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	4
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	4
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	4
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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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