

St Michael's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Patricia Webb

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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*.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St Michael's Nursery has been registered under the current private ownership since June 2006. It operates from four base rooms in a single storey building in Smethwick. It is situated in a residential area close to local amenities. The nursery primarily serves children from the local community and surrounding areas. Facilities are easily accessible to all with direct access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The nursery is open each weekday from 7.30am to 6.00pm throughout the year, with the exception of public holidays.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 42 children may attend the nursery at any one time. There are currently 48 children on roll in the early years age range, some of whom, attend on a part-time basis. Older children may attend and this provision is registered by Ofsted on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The setting employs 13 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least Level 2. Some staff are in the process of furthering their qualifications. In addition, the setting also employs a business operations manager and a cook. The nursery receives support from the local authority early years advisory team.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Practice in St Michael's Nursery is improving steadily as the manager and the staff team are working towards developing the provision effectively with safeguarding being a key strength. Children are making steady progress in their development and learning as staff have a working knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Partnerships with parents are developing in order to promote their active involvement in their children's progress. There is a firm commitment to continued improvement as the manager takes the lead in motivating and engaging staff in the process for evaluating the quality of the provision. The current evaluation process is not yet wholly systematic in prioritising some key aspects leading to some gaps in provision, such as limited strategies for inclusive practice and the processes for assessment and planning to promote children's outcomes.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- extend systems to make meaningful observations and assessments and use these to clearly identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child across all areas of learning
- develop staff awareness and skills within the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to build upon individual children's interests and use the naturally

- occurring opportunities to maximise their learning and development
- review the organisation of some large group activities to ensure that they are appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children and maintain their interest and attention
- improve the process for recording information from parents prior to the children starting with regard to the settling-in procedures and individual care routines.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and staff safeguard children well and the procedures for managing child protection issues are soundly established. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and know what the procedures are should they have a concern. Children are further protected through appropriate staff recruitment procedures, which ensure all adults are vetted. Detailed risk assessments are carried out to identify and minimise hazards to children. Where risks are noted, such as the raised surface on part of the flooring in the bathroom, staff take care to remind children about the hazards and plans are in place to address these issues soon.

The nursery is developing a firm partnership with parents and carers although the recording of some background information and care routines for some children is erratic and hinders their settling-in procedures. Parents are however becoming actively involved in some aspects of the operation of the setting and some are currently involved in designing and selecting a new logo for the nursery. Some parents have contributed by writing 'Welcome' in their home languages on the wall leading to the nursery entrance as part of the attractive child-focused mural started by the manager. Partnerships with other providers involved in children's Early Years Foundation Stage provision are also developing well and innovative ideas help children in the transition into primary school. For example, uniform jumpers and sweatshirts from some of the feeder schools are available in the dressing-up clothes so that children can see them and become familiar with them prior to moving up. Other agencies and professionals associated with individual children's care and welfare visit regularly and clear records are maintained of observations and discussions in order to promote a consistent approach to benefit each child as appropriate.

Much work has been done to improve the overall condition and ambience of the environment since the last inspection. Most rooms have been redecorated and the presentation of resources has improved enabling each child to make choices about their activities and develop their independence. Signage around the setting has improved with pictures used to indicate resources and activity areas indoors and outside and also to explain some routines. This ensures that any child can be assisted in knowing the routines of the day, helping to promote a sense of security and belonging. The manager has a very clear understanding of the setting's current strengths and areas for further improvement. Staff are beginning to contribute to this evaluation process as they observe and monitor overall practice. However, they are not always aware of making full use of some opportunities that

occur during the day to maximise children's learning, such as extending the process of children selecting and considering the names for the newly acquired fish. Some whole group activities are not effectively planned or delivered to maintain children's interests. For instance, during the activity where children make the bread, they lose interest and their attention wanders as they wait for their turn to mix the dough.

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

Children enjoy a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and generally receive an appropriate range of experiences across the areas of learning. Consequently, most children enjoy their time at the setting, are developing positive attitudes and making steady progress. Ongoing observations are beginning to be used to identify children's achievements and next steps and staff are starting to use this to inform the planning of activities and learning experiences for children. However, as yet the information is not being used effectively to fully recognise the uniqueness of each child and staff are not yet sufficiently intuitive in their delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to maximise the learning opportunities that occur.

Generally, children play co-operatively and form friendships with their peers and the adults. The revised layout of the setting now enables children to have more opportunities to self-select and make choices about their activity as they develop their independence. The limited information staff have with regard to some younger children's care routines results in staff taking some time to get to know their needs fully and respond to their unique characteristics. Older children settle in the comfy book corner in each base, seeking books spontaneously and listening to stories from staff, particularly when this is done as a small group activity. Some children are beginning to recognise key letters from their names and attempt emergent writing. Babies and toddlers enjoy spreading foam and gloop using their whole bodies and hands, delighting in the tactile experience as well as making marks and patterns. They are developing an awareness for rhythm and beat as they listen to music, use instruments both home-made and commercial to make their music. Babies crawl and toddle to treasure baskets, as they discover the various textures of brushes, voile material and metal utensils. Children learn about the wider world and develop a positive attitude to peoples' similarities and differences through a range of resources and activities that reflect positive images of the wider society.

Healthy eating and the promotion of children's ongoing health and well-being is encouraged by the staff to help children understand about their own personal needs. They access the outdoor play areas frequently throughout the day although the manager is very aware that this is not so frequent for younger children and has identified this as an area for further improvement. Nutritious meals are prepared on site from fresh ingredients, covering all of the main food groups ensuring that children have balanced diets with any specific dietary requirements or feeding routines adhered to. The snack times for older children are now presented as a café-style routine, and children choose when, and with whom they enjoy their

snacks of fresh and dried fruit along with fresh drinking water. Minor accidents and illnesses are managed appropriately with the relevant records maintained and shared with parents and carers.

Children are learning about keeping safe. For example, staff talk about 'stranger danger', road safety and safety around the nursery building or garden and have regular fire drills which help children to know exactly what to do if the fire alarm is raised. Children speak animatedly about their recent trip to the pet shop, recalling how they must behave when standing waiting for the bus and when travelling. Overall children's behaviour is suitably managed. Some younger toddlers are assisted in becoming aware of their needs of others as well as their own, learning to share and take turns. Older children know the boundaries and expectations of their behaviour and respond well to stickers and praise as their self-esteem is promoted. During some of the larger group activities, children become unsettled and easily distracted as they wait their turn or struggle to sit whilst looking at the book being held up by the member of staff during a story.

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	3
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	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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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	3
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met