

St Monica's Catholic Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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01/02/2010

Inspector

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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 Monica's Catholic Pre-School opened in 2009. The setting is organised by a committee of governors and representatives from the school, and operates from a designated pre-school facility within St Monica's Catholic Primary School, Appleton, Cheshire. There is a secure area available for outdoor play along with other school outdoor play space. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 30 children aged from two to under five years and there are currently 27 children on roll. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The setting is open five days a week during term-time and employs five staff, four of whom have early years qualifications. The setting is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The children are happy and busy in this active environment where they feel safe and supported by the staff. They are provided with a good range of play activities, by staff who have an excellent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, children are progressing well in all areas of learning. Observation and assessment systems are clearly linked to planning for children's next steps and enhancing children's learning and development opportunities. The individuality of each child is recognised and managed very well. Policies and procedures securely underpin the settings practice. However, the setting's self-evaluation is only partially effective in identifying its strengths and areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop the system for evaluating the provision in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement
- further develop tracking systems to ensure consistency of delivery in all areas of learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The children's welfare is promoted well because practitioners have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and procedures. Staff are well informed about procedures to keep children safe and have a strong commitment to safeguarding. All the required policies, procedures and documentation are in place and well maintained to further promote children's welfare. Children are kept safe and secure due to the vigilance of the staff and the regular risk assessments undertaken. The children have daily access to a secure outdoor play area, where

staff closely supervise them to ensure their safety at all times. Staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding children procedures and are clear about the action required to protect children should the need arise. Full fire drills are in place, recorded and regularly practised to ensure all children have a thorough understanding of what to do in an emergency. All staff have appropriate checks carried out to ensure their suitability and the details are recorded so the manager is able to see at a glance the reference numbers and dates they were completed. Resources are deployed well around the setting and areas are well organised to provide stimulating play and learning opportunities for children. This enables children to move freely and to choose from the different activities provided for them. The staff work hard to ensure the sessions run smoothly so that children feel settled and confident in their routine.

The staff have a clear vision for the future of the group and have identified some areas for improvement, such as further developing the curriculum. They actively promote the individuality and uniqueness of each child. They provide a good range of age-appropriate activities and resources to ensure all children can participate regardless of gender, background, ability or disability. Staff are all highly motivated and supported by management to further their skills and qualifications. This provides a strong basis to drive improvement and raise standards throughout the setting. The staff have clear roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team. Individual plans for children are effectively implemented because staff promote equal opportunities and inclusion well.

Parents provide information about their child's individual needs and their likes and dislikes when they first join the setting, this information helps the setting to establish the child's starting points. Staff and parents regularly exchange verbal information about children's individual needs and achievements at the start and end of each session and parents contribute to a 'parental viewing check' with further information and comments. Information displayed gives parents sufficient information regarding policies, procedures, activities and future events. Parents comment positively on the care and education provided to their children. The staff have well established knowledge of the range of specialist skills on offer from other external agencies and support children with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties very well indeed.

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

The children enjoy a range of interesting and enjoyable activities, both indoors and outdoors. They are settled, relaxed and are given a high level of support that ensures their social skills are developing very well. Lots of praise and encouragement by staff, together with sensitive interventions, ensure children are encouraged to participate and join in. Effective planning provides children with an excellent balance of adult-led and child focused activities and experiences, which keep children involved and eager to learn. The staff know children well and develop written observations and assessments of children's progress to ensure all individual needs are met. Tracking systems allow them to make sure that all areas of learning are well covered, however, they are not well enough developed to

ensure consistency.

Children are extremely confident when exploring the environment both indoors and outdoors. They play a full and active role in their own learning, make choices, decisions and extend activities, with the staff providing good support. For example, children imaginatively go on a 'journey', using cardboard boxes to role play the transport. Staff skilfully extend the activity through appropriate interventions or questions and the children shriek with laughter and enjoyment as they all take their places for the journey. A range of activities and resources help them to role play in the home corner, explore how things work, and understand mathematical concepts, as they talk about size, numbers, colour and shapes.

Children independently talk about relationships and 'best friends' as they creatively explore in sand and water play. Children explore and make meaning of the world they live in and their environment. They are given clear rules regarding behaviour with staff being excellent role models, consequently children's behaviour is excellent. They understand each other's limitations and have good self-esteem. Minor disputes amongst children are sometimes resolved by the children themselves. The children paint with obvious enjoyment and they concentrate for long periods on chosen activities. They celebrate significant events, such as cultural events on regular basis. They make very good progress in personal and social skills through a range of challenging and exciting experiences as they play both independently and together, understanding the need to share or take turns.

They are developing the skills of communication, language and literacy and staff encourage children to understand word sounds and to develop phonic language. The children say 'h' is for hungry, they explore and experiment with sounds. They listen with enjoyment and respond positively to stories, songs and rhymes. The children are encouraged to count and compare in a number of activities. Fine motor skills are encouraged through the use a range of writing and art and craft activities. Children have a strong sense of belonging because there is a strong sense of security in the group. They show they feel safe and are confident as they freely access resources and choose which activities interest them most, talk to adults in the room and form close bonds with each other.

Children clearly understand about a healthy lifestyle as they wash and dry hands, and why it is important to do so. They make informed choices about what they eat and drink and when to enjoy a snack. When they finish eating they independently clear away dishes so that the space is ready for the next person. They have a well developed understanding of what foods are healthy as they give a thumbs or thumbs down to foods in an activity led by staff. They enjoy physical exercise sessions and recognise the effects of exercise and diet on their bodies to 'make their hearts strong'. They cycle, run, play vigorously, and with enthusiasm and energy. Children's general good health is promoted as they make the most of the fresh air and outdoor play available to them each day.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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

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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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