

St Michael's Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

14/05/2010

Inspector

Carys Millican

Setting address

Youth and Community Centre, Recreation Field, The Green,
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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 Nursery is run by a voluntary management committee and operates from within the Recreation Centre near the Bowling Green, in Dalston, Cumbria. Children have access to a reception area, music room, main hall and associated facilities. There is no enclosed play area for the children to access. However, with parental consent, the staff take children on daily outings to the adventure play area, tennis courts or surrounding football pitches, where they are closely supervised.

The pre-school nursery was originally established approximately 20 years ago and has operated on its present site since 2007. It is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9.15am to 11.45am during term time, with a lunch club from 11.45am to 12.45pm on a Friday only. Currently there are 16 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The setting receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years old. Children attend from the village and surrounding rural area.

The setting employs two staff members who hold appropriate early years qualifications. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and works closely with the Local Authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The staff team provide the children are provided with an excellent start in their learning and development by organising the environment to meet children's needs. They deploy themselves well in order to support, challenge and extend children's play within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff recognise children's unique qualities and build on their individual interests. They provide an interesting, stimulating and inclusive environment within safe, secure and well resourced play areas. Staff engage with parents and carers well to ensure children's care and welfare needs are suitably met, and partnership with the local school enables a smooth transition process on entry. The management have a clear vision for future improvement and have recently started a self-evaluation process to ensure the continuous improvement of the setting.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop resources and activities that help children to understand about the difference and diversity of the world around them
- develop systems to gather information about children's starting points and

establish links with other settings children attend in order to complement the learning taking place

- continue to develop self-evaluation systems and encourage parents' and children's involvement in the process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and staff ensure children are kept safe and secure as thorough safeguarding procedures are implemented at the setting. The staff have a good understanding of the safeguarding policies and procedures and these are effectively implemented by dedicated persons and fully trained staff, who understand their roles and responsibilities if a concern should arise. The policies and procedures that ensure the smooth running of the setting are regularly reviewed and made available for parents in the reception area. Rigorous recruitment procedures are followed to ensure children are cared for by suitable persons, and ongoing suitability is assured through regular appraisals. Children are kept safe and secure, both indoors and outdoors, through detailed risk assessment and thorough health and safety practices, which are completed on all areas accessible to children. For example, staff complete visual safety checks before children arrive and before they access any outdoor play area. Parental consent is obtained for children to undertake outings and to play on the public adventure play area adjacent to the building. Children regularly practise the fire evacuation procedure so that they understand what to do in an emergency.

The manager is a highly motivated, dedicated and committed practitioner. She has a clear vision for the future development and improvement of the setting and her enthusiasm is shared by her staff team and committee. The staff's personal development plans ensure children are well cared for by experienced practitioners. They are highly committed to improving their knowledge and everyday practice by regularly attending core subject training sessions and additional courses. The manager and staff members work effectively as a team. They regularly meet with the committee to discuss child issues, planning, resources, and policy documents. The manager is confident about the strengths of the setting and the areas for improvement. She has made a start on the self-evaluation process with the staff, however parents and children are not involved in this process. Past and present action plans discussed with local authority workers have been implemented and all the previous recommendations made at the last inspection have improved the outcomes for children.

The setting establishes positive relationships with parents and carers to ensure children's needs are well met. Parents find the staff very friendly and approachable. They feel that they are kept informed about their children's ongoing development, achievements, and welfare, and indicate how much the setting has improved under the new manager. Staff actively engage with parents very well. They take the time to speak with them on arrival and collection, explaining what the children have done during the session. Children's development folders are available for parents who make some additional comments within them about how they feel their child is progressing. However, there is limited information gathered

from parents about children's developmental starting points upon registering. The setting has established links with the local school most children will attend and this enables a smooth transition into the school for these children when required. However, links with the other settings children attend are not established.

Children access an effective, well-organised, inclusive and welcoming learning environment. They are excellently supported by experienced key-worker staff who provide an extensive selection of accessible resources and a good balance of activities within the enhanced play provision. Children's work is creatively displayed and several notice boards contain posters and information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. Positive images, resources and activities that support children's understanding of difference and diversity in the world around them are limited. Children, parents and carers are warmly welcomed into the pre-school nursery. They feel valued and develop a sense of belonging.

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

Children are happy, confident, independent individuals who benefit from the excellent care, appropriate activities and interesting play opportunities the staff provide. Children are supported well by experienced practitioners who have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff are aware of children's individual needs and interests and they effectively challenge and support them to achieve good outcomes. Children's independence is encouraged in the environment where they can freely access suitable age-appropriate resources which are stored in low level storage units or small labelled containers. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff observe, monitor and evaluate children's play, and planning is sufficiently flexible to allow for spontaneous events so that staff can respond to children's ideas and interests. For example, staff provide empty cardboard boxes for the children and they become a train. Staff complete observations as children play and these identify the next steps in their learning, which are clearly identified in the planning.

Children are well-behaved and enjoy each others company. They show a sense of achievement as the staff constantly praise them in front of others. Children's learning is skilfully developed by staff who challenge children as they play and use open-ended questioning. This encourages children to think for themselves and promotes language and communication skills. Children spontaneously learn about number, shape and colour through various activities. They consider new concepts, such as opposites, and new vocabulary is introduced as they play with zoo animals and building bricks. Children enjoy singing number rhymes when playing with water, where they count the number of plastic frogs and ducks. They competently use tools such as scissors and pencils. Their creativity and imagination are extensively well-developed.

Staff take the children outside for ball games and physical play activities, which the children enjoy. Indoors, they independently help themselves to trikes, scooters and cars. They learn to control their movements within a designated area in the main hall, keeping themselves and others safe. Children begin to understand the

importance of healthy living, good hygiene practice and a healthy lifestyle. Staff encourage independence and self-help skills at snack time when children enjoy sitting together to eat. Children learn safe practices and are reminded not to run indoors and to stay safe outside. They are beginning to learn about how to look after the environment and they grow seeds and recycle waste products in the craft area.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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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	2
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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