



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 219169

DfES Number: 514903

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	26/11/2003
Inspector Name	Heather Jeanette Knox

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St Marks Pre-school
Setting Address	St Mary's Church Community Centre Calder Rise Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 7UY

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	St Marks Church Council
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	St Marks Church Council
Address	Calder Rise Bedford Bedfordshire MK41 7UY

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

St Mark's Church Pre-School opened in 1976. It operates from two rooms in St Mark's Community Centre which is in the Brickhill area of Bedford. The group also have access to the toilets in the main hall and have an enclosed garden to the front of the building. The children who attend come mainly from the local surrounding area.

There are currently 55 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 46 funded three year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs. There are no children attending who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens every morning and Monday and Friday afternoons during term times only. Sessions are from 0930 until 1200 and 1230 until 1500.

One full time and nine part time staff work with the children. Seven staff work each session. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

St Mark's Church Pre School provides a good standard of care for children.

All aspects of the provision is well organised and effective use is made of the staff to provide a stimulating learning environment for the children. The group has sound policies and procedures which are appropriately followed by the staff.

Staff ensure health and safety issues are met and work hard to provide the children with a wide range of planned activities in a warm and welcoming environment. The group have a good selection of resources to cover all areas of learning, although children have limited opportunities to self select and make their own choices.

Children are well behaved and followed the guidelines set by the staff. Children with special needs are well supported and fully included in all activities. Staff promote good hygiene habits such as encouraging children to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilets. However, the storage of rubbish needs reviewing.

The staff build up close relationships with the parents. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus giving full details of the organisation of the group. However, the registration form completed by the parents only give brief details regarding their child's background. Parents are encouraged to share and take part in their child's learning.

Documentation is in place to support the management of the group although some aspects need reviewing.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group agreed to review documentation relating to medical procedures, produce an outings policy and ensure details relating to new committee members are forwarded to Ofsted. The group have improved documentation relating to medical issues and Ofsted is kept informed of any changes. An outing policy has not yet been produced.

What is being done well?

- The staff offer good support to families who have children with special needs. They work closely with the parents and external agencies to help meet individual children's needs.
- The children are offered a wide range of activities and resources and staff sit with the children, and through skilful interaction help to extend their play and learning.
- Staff have good relationships with the parents who receive regular information about the events and activities taking place within the group.
- The staff provide the children with a welcoming environment which is safe and secure.

What needs to be improved?

- the documentation to ensure there are procedures for a lost child and outings,
- the registration forms to provide more information about the background of the child and their family,
- the children's ability to self select some of the resources and equipment.
- the rubbish bins need to be covered.

Outcome of the inspection
Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION
<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
5	Increase opportunities for children to select and choose their own play resources from low level storage.
7	Ensure all rubbish bins have lids.
9	Review registration forms to ensure children's cultural, religious and linguistic needs are known.
14	Ensure that procedures are produced for the safe conduct of children on outings and in the event of a lost child.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at St Marks Church Pre School is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a good knowledge of the foundation stage and positively interact with the children and extend their learning. They plan a range of interesting activities for all areas of learning, although short term plans do not always clearly identify the expected learning outcome. Staff set clear boundaries for the children and encourage them to play cooperatively. Good support is given to children with special educational needs. Staff regularly observe and assess children against the stepping stones and this helps to focus and plan for future individual learning targets.

The leadership and management of the pre school is very good. The group benefits from strong leadership and a cohesive staff team. The staff work very well together and share their knowledge and skills. There is a sound management structure in place to help monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. Staff have regular appraisals and actively take part in ongoing training.

The staff have good relationships with the parents. Parents are involved with their child's learning by helping at the group and taking home reading books. They are also invited into the group for open mornings and evening talks on the foundation stage. Staff talk to the parents on a daily basis and they are informed about their child's assessments but lack formal feedback on their child's achievements, until their child leaves.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children are confident, sociable and have caring relationships with each other and the staff.
- The staff work very well as a team and share their knowledge and skills. They are aware of their own roles and responsibilities during the session and give each other support.
- Staff use effective questioning techniques to encourage the children to think for themselves and use their own knowledge.
- Strong emphasis is placed on developing children's mathematical skills and the understanding of mathematical language through structured activities and in free play.

What needs to be improved?

- the short term plans to clearly show the expected learning outcomes,
- the information given to the parents regarding their child's progress.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group have made generally good progress since the last inspection and this has had a positive effect on children's learning. Long, medium and short term plan are in place. All the staff are involved in the planning and individual staff plan for each day. Some staff produce more comprehensive planning sheets than others and include an overall aim for the day. However, it is not always clear from the plans what the learning objective is from the adult led activity and this could lead to missed opportunities to extend learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are confident and relate well to each other and adults in the group. They are keen to take part in all the activities and become involved in their play. Children work well on their own and in small groups. They show concentration and perseverance as they complete puzzles and sort objects into sets. Children are well behaved and have an understanding of right and wrong. They share and take turns and help everyone tidy up. They celebrate special days and help raise money for charity.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children are keen to talk and share their views and opinions in large and small groups. They discuss new words such as 'advent' and 'dove' and have general conversations on their 'mobile phones'. They are very competent at recognising their own name and many children know the initial sound of their name and familiar words. Children enjoy looking at books and sit and listen with pleasure to stories and rhymes. Older children regularly write their name on their work and use pens to make marks.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are very competent at counting and recognising numerals to ten and above. Older children are skilled in mathematics and are able to add three onto nine to make twelve. Children use numbers in their play and take part in number rhymes and songs. They recognise when they have the same number of objects and can tell when there are more or less girls than boys present. Children can match and sort into different categories and confidently recognise many different shapes and sizes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children use their investigative and exploratory skills as they take part in many activities including baking gingerbread men and making jelly. They observe real snails, play with ice cubes, plant bulbs, and use magnets to separate metal and plastic lids. Children discuss features of the local environment as they regularly go out for walks and look at the buildings and bring back leaves and twigs. They have visits from local police and fire fighters. Children confidently use electronic toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children move easily and confidently around the play rooms. They enjoy taking part in music and movement pretending to be snowflakes turning round and round. They confidently use the climbing frame and the balance beams and enjoy the challenge of the rope ladder. Children are competent at using different tools and equipment. They effectively use spoons, rollers and cutters to make their gingerbread men. They wrap up present with sellotape, sew with needles and punch holes into paper.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children take part in a range of creative activities including painting, cutting and collage work. They paint using different techniques including use of their hands, feet, leaves and sponges. They experiment with play dough, sand, mud and water. Children effectively use their senses as they cook with different spices and make observational drawings of daffodils. They enjoy singing and taking part in action rhymes and songs. Children have good imaginative skills and act out different stories.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- develop the short term plan to identify the expected learning outcome from the adult led activity
- provide the parents with more detailed information regarding their child's developmental progress.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.