

St Marys Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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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 Mary's Nursery was registered in 1992. It is run by a voluntary committee, and is based within a modern church which is located close to the towns of Frimley and Camberley, in Surrey. The group uses a large hall with kitchen and toilet facilities. They have direct access to an enclosed outside play area. The nursery and the church have a close working relationship. The children come from the local community.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register. It is open from Monday to Thursday from 9am to 1pm and from 9am to 2.30pm on Thursdays and Fridays. The setting is registered for 26 children aged two to five years and there are currently 43 children on roll. The setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children.

Six members of staff work with the children, of which five work everyday. All six staff hold childcare qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3. All staff hold current first aid certificates. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well met due to the good communication that is established with parents. The newly appointed manager has been instrumental in working with staff and the committee to initiate changes and make many improvements to the provision. There are clear plans in place to extend consultation to parents and children. Key strengths of the provision are related to the stimulating child-led environment, good team work, and leadership and management. Self-evaluation processes include objectives that will continue to improve outcomes for children, although some areas of good practice have not yet been achieved or have been overlooked.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review and improve the range of adult-led creative activities so they are appropriate for children's age and stage of development
- improve the resources for children to develop their skills with climbing and negotiating space and for them to explore the local environment
- improve continuity and coherence in children's care and learning by sharing relevant information with parents and other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is fully safeguarded because staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. All staff attend training updates and there are plans in place for the manager to attend extended training so that there are two named child protection officers within the provision. Staff and committee suitability checks are in place. Risk assessment records are used to ensure children's safety.

The manager is currently completing an Early Years Professional Status qualification. She uses her knowledge from this training to influence changes that make improvements to the provision. For example, she encourages staff to celebrate their successes, think about how activities work and introduce ideas to make them better next time. Lots of discussion between the team, including weekly planning meetings, enable improvements to be identified and implemented, for example, to the layout of the large hall, resources for physical development, and children's assessment records. A good partnership with the nursery committee includes meetings to establish clear expectations, and ensure any difficulties are ironed out. However, insufficient consideration has been given to evaluating the effectiveness of planned creative activities, and partnership with other providers where children attend additional provision.

The manager welcomes suggestions and ideas from parents, and has plans in place to implement questionnaires, and times for children to say what they like and do not like about the provision. All recommendations from the last inspection have been met. Staff provide children with very positive role models, work well as a team, and successfully capture children's interest and inclusion by joining in their play. Discussions with children and the use of resources such as posters, books and dolls help to promote children's knowledge of diversity. The environment is welcoming to children and includes areas that promote most aspects of their learning and development.

Communication with parents is good. The provision is open to sharing information about children's individual needs and progress. Staff are available to talk with parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are offered consultation meetings once a term to discuss and share information about their children's individual progress and next steps for their learning. Parents speak very positively about the nursery. For example, they say 'staff are so nice and friendly and my child is so happy', 'the nursery is a really warm and friendly environment and I feel safe about bringing my child here', and 'there are really experienced caring leaders who connect with the children'.

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development. Keyworkers keep a record of the next steps for each child's learning and where there are gaps to inform future planning. This is updated every term. Children's interests are embraced, for example, when they talk enthusiastically about a kitten they have at home, staff put plans in place to set up an imaginary 'pets corner'. Children are extremely happy, independent and self-motivated within their play. They develop good self help skills as they set out the mats and cups for snack time and help staff to cut up fruit and vegetables. Children are very well behaved and learn to share resources, such as the bikes, as staff make use of a large egg timer and discuss the importance of taking turns.

Children show good communication skills and are keen to talk with staff and each other during their play. A decorated posting box called 'Metal Mike' successfully captures children's interest, and promotes their knowledge of the sounds of letters of the alphabet. Staff sit on the floor with small groups of children and encourage them to identify objects and the sounds of letters on picture cards before posting them into 'Metal Mike's' mouth. As a result, some children are beginning to develop early reading skills as they identify all the sounds in short words such as 'bat'. Children concentrate extremely well while listening to stories as part of small and large groups. They enjoy drawing and making marks, and some older children can write their name with most letters correctly formed.

Children work well independently and with others, for example, as they join pieces of large puzzles. Staff support them and introduce questions that encourage children to notice and identify different patterns, such as stripes. However, they are not always observant of when younger children need additional help. Children develop an understanding of number as they sing songs such as 'Hickory Dickory Dock', and show enthusiasm as they make up their own games using posters that identify different coloured objects. Children show interest in using measuring sticks to identify differences in their height. They investigate and explore objects such as magnifying glasses and safety goggles, and show interest in the effects of different properties, for example, as they look at each other through different coloured plastic. They make their own discoveries as they attach magnets to chair legs, and tell adults that it is because 'they are metal'. Staff make good use of opportunities to extend children's knowledge of the features of living things, for example, when they choose to play with animals such as plastic bats, they talk about where bats live and how they hang upside down. However, there are no opportunities for children to explore nature and the local environment. Children take part in the celebration of cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year, where they eat noodles at snack time and play imaginatively in a pretend Chinese restaurant.

Children show good hand and eye co-ordination as they use a wide range of indoor resources. For example, they fill and empty watering cans and operate computer programmes that make them laugh. Outdoor play equipment promotes children's balancing and manoeuvring skills, for example, as they use wheeled toys and a small trampoline. However, there are no resources that present sufficient challenge

or develop their ability to climb and negotiate space. Children play imaginatively as they pull small toy dogs around on leads, dress up and use role play resources in the home corner. They often express their feelings and show confidence as they dance spontaneously to music with their friends. Children make use of an excellent range of accessible resources which are available for them to make their own creations. Staff are observant and responsive to children's interests. For example, when they notice designs on the front of books, they provide tracing paper so children can copy them. However, planned creative activities are sometimes too complicated and do not enable children to complete them independently. Children sing with enthusiasm and know the words to familiar nursery rhymes and a prayer, which they recite with animation at the end of each session.

Children behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others as they quickly remember and cooperate with the nursery rules, such as 'no running indoors'. They learn what to do in the event of a fire as they take part in evacuation procedures every half term. They enjoy healthy snacks which include fresh fruit, and bring packed lunches from home which are appropriately stored. Staff and children follow good hygiene practice and all staff hold current first aid certificates.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	3
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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