

St Mary's Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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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 Mary's Pre-school Playgroup was registered in 1999 and operates from St Mary's Church Hall in Ipswich. It is a registered charity and is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents of some of the children who attend the setting. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. During school term times, sessions run every weekday morning from 9am to 12pm and on Monday and Friday afternoons from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. A lunch club is available on Monday and Fridays from 12pm until 12.30pm. Children come from a wide catchment area and attend for a variety of sessions.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children under five years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 49 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age range. The setting provides funded early education for two, three and four year olds. The staff currently support a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children. Six of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2, and two members of staff are currently working towards further qualifications. The manager is currently working towards a Foundation Degree in Childcare, Learning and Development. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in the highly reflective practice and make exceptional progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff build very close, trusting relationships with the children and their families enabling them to feel safe, secure, happy and to settle in very well. Inclusion threads through the setting and partnerships are well established. The staff and committee are highly motivated and work as a strong team to ensure that they are continuously improving outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- reviewing and reflecting on routines to extend opportunities for children to access the whole range of activities throughout the session.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded from abuse and neglect as staff are very aware of their roles and responsibilities and follow procedures closely. Policies are in place and reviewed regularly to ensure they are in line with current requirements. Staff ratios are high, enabling children to receive individual attention when needed and they are supervised at all times. Staff are vigilant and carry out regular, thorough risk assessments. The premises are safe and secure, unauthorised persons cannot gain access and children cannot leave unsupervised.

The play leader communicates ambition and drive and staff are highly motivated. For example, all the staff and two committee members take part in a 'Working With Parents' workshop and have used ideas to make further improvements. Staff take pride in their chosen areas of responsibility, working as a strong team to continuously make improvements for children. For example, children benefit from 'Every Child A Talker' work, which also provides staff with valuable opportunities to visit other settings. Staff deployment is highly effective, they support the children in their play, challenging their thinking and encouraging language. Teaching is rooted in the expert knowledge of the well qualified staff. Self-evaluation is a key strength and the setting is able to clearly identify their strengths and areas for development through rigorous monitoring. For example, significant changes to the building and outdoor area have been made to ensure that the premises are inclusive and suitable for their purpose. Children clearly benefit and thrive in the well designed outdoor area.

Responsive planning is well established and staff keep valuable records on each child, planning their next steps in their development. The sessions are organised to ensure that there are opportunities for children to work individually, in small groups and in large groups. Children have access to an extensive range of play experiences throughout the session. However, staff are aware of the need to review the routine as some activities are cleared away an hour before the end of the session.

Parents are heavily involved in setting, encouraged to make decisions and offer their skills. They are exceptionally well informed about their child's achievements, development and well-being. Parent evenings take place every term and alternative, highly inclusive methods to share information are also provided, such as, a digital photograph frame, emails, news letters, planning letters. Parents can share their child's records at any time. Parents are also encouraged to attend the sessions and help in any way they choose. Their comments are valued and encouraged through regular questionnaires and daily chats. There are well established channels of communication between all partners involved in individual children, successfully promoting their learning, development and welfare. For example, there are close links between other settings the children attend, providing opportunities to share records and talk about children's progress and interests to provide a consistent approach.

Staff have an exceptional knowledge of the children's backgrounds and needs and

excellent partnerships ensure that every child receives high levels of support at an early stage. The setting actively promotes equality and diversity and it is at the centre of the provision. For example, parents and children feel welcome and their cultures, languages and traditions valued. All children are included, for example, the kitchen area is designed to support all children to use it safely. When very young, or smaller children attend, the sand pit is taken off the stand and put at their level on the floor.

Resources are of high quality and always evolving as the staff add more ideas. For example, they are introducing metal detectors for children to discover 'treasure' under the sand and bark. Resource boxes for windy, rainy, sunny and snowy days extend their learning further. The outdoor area is stimulating and well designed making the relatively small area into a rich and inviting play experience.

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

Children thrive in the rich and stimulating play environment. They are extremely independent and have a strong sense of belonging, consequently they settle exceptionally well. For example, when they start they all have a name and photograph card to hang where they put their coat. The parents are provided with a small photo album which they are asked to put photographs in of the children's family, friends and familiar things. Staff use these to support children to settle as they share them and talk about their lives and families. Parents are also asked to make a bag or box for their children who proudly use them to store pictures and art work in before taking them home.

Children's language skills are successfully promoted as the staff use a variety of methods to aid communication. They use visual time tables, pictures on cards that they carry around with them and Makaton signing. They value the wide range of languages of the children who attend and learn important words. An electronic translator pen is also used to aid understanding. The staff, children and parents have taken part in the 'Every Child A Talker' scheme. This has had an extremely positive impact on the children's language and they have a wealth of opportunities, including using story sacks which they can take home to share with their parents.

Information and technology resources are inclusive to all children and the computer has a large key pad as well as an additional large roller mouse for those who find the small mouse difficult. Valuable opportunities are provided for children to regularly explore their local environment as they visit the park, library, allotments and take part in 'Forest Schools' activities. They look for wild life, such as, squirrels, birds, frogs and slow worms and watch the trains going across the viaduct. The staff have innovating ideas for bringing visitors into the group and children enjoy creative sessions, opportunities to handle pets with the vet, as well as encouraging parents to share their cultures and festivals.

Children confidently use mathematical language as they build a house with the large bricks, cooperating and negotiating size and position. They count as they

weigh the teddies in the balancing scales and match numbers on their bikes to the parking bays in the room. They delight in using their imaginations as they talk for the play animals, moving them along the step, making the crocodile bite the gorilla and cheetah. They have many opportunities to be creative as they independently select collage and junk modelling items to create individual works of art.

Children's physical development is extremely well promoted. They enjoy climbing, sliding and balancing on the climbing frame and have daily opportunities to ride on bikes and in cars. They move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas and explore the seasons in all weathers. They happily dig in the sand and soil as they plant flowers and herbs and use the taps on the water butts to fill watering cans to water the plants. Photographs show children designing and making structures out of canes and string and they hide animals and dinosaurs in the bamboo.

Children learn to keep themselves healthy as they gain an understanding of healthy eating with a range of healthy snacks and discuss the food in their lunch boxes. Their dietary needs are very well met as staff ensure they have all the information about any allergies, intolerances and food preferences to hand. They are very aware of respecting the individual and cultural needs of all children and work hard to meet them. For example, they make toast for a child who does not like sandwiches. They use celebrations as opportunities to introduce a range of foods from all over the world and parents and children are involved in the preparation.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe through everyday opportunities, such as, learning how to use the climbing frame and not crawling under the slide when others are coming down. They learn about road safety on outings and have their own set of traffic lights and draw chalk road markings on the ground. Children cooperate with each other extremely well and share the toys and equipment. They understand about taking turns through using a sand timer at the computer and are involved in making the simple setting rules. The staff value and respect the children, they are calm and consistent, providing positive role models for the children to follow.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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