

St Michaels Pre-School

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 Michael's Pre-School opened in 1975. It is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents whose children attend the setting. It operates from St Michael's Church Hall in Stanground, Peterborough. The pre-school is open five days a week in school term times. Sessions are from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12pm to 3pm except on Tuesdays when there is no afternoon session. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time and there are currently 60 children on roll who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. The pre-school currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff; all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Resources are well deployed to enable children to become active learners in a range of challenging experiences so that they make very good progress in their learning and development. Staff develop exceptionally good communication links between parents and others so that children's needs are effectively met. Children are valued and acknowledged as individuals because staff develop close and nurturing relationships with them. The leadership and management of the setting is a key strength; effective monitoring and evaluation of the provision enables staff to identify areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- maximise the use of the outdoor environment to further enhance children's learning in communication, language and literacy, and problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy
- update the risk assessment to include appropriate handwashing procedures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Rigorous recruitment and induction arrangements ensure staff who work with children are suitable to do so, including supply staff. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children procedures and help

children to understand how to keep themselves safe. They attend child protection training regularly to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis to ensure that hazards are identified and minimised to safeguard children. All these factors contribute to the setting safeguarding children effectively and ensuring they are kept safe from harm. Systems are in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the provision to identify priorities for improvement which involves staff and parents. For example, the introduction of small group sessions has had a positive effect on children's language and listening skills. There is a very strong emphasis on raising standards, continually improving the provision and self-evaluation is good.

Staff have clear strategies in place to care for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs so that they are included in the life of the setting. The pre-school manager provides strong and effective leadership which means staff work very well together as a cohesive team, presenting positive role models for children. The provision is very well organised and staff are effectively deployed so children are safe and supervised at all times. Comprehensive documentation is in place for the safe running of the pre-school and underpins the good practice at the setting; policies and procedures are implemented effectively by all staff and shared with parents.

Staff are highly committed to working in partnership with others and take a lead role in establishing effective working relationships. There are very well established channels of communication between all partners involved with individual children, which successfully promotes their learning, development and welfare. For example, staff visit children's other setting to observe them in play and they use this information to inform individual planning and this ensures children's achievement and well-being is very well promoted. Staff work extremely well in partnership with parents and carers and staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the benefits of working closely with parents. They strive to provide frequent opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning. For example, parents have regular opportunities to contribute to their child's 'learning journeys', sharing what they know about their child and they receive information on activities they can do at home to further support their child's learning. Parents speak highly of the setting and staff, and the safe and enjoyable environment their children benefit from. Very good settling-in procedures that are based around their individual needs helps to support children in the transition between home and the pre-school.

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

Children are very independent; they competently make choices and direct their own play which enables them to be active learners. Staff use effective questioning to encourage children to demonstrate what they know. Children are relaxed and confident in the nurturing care of staff; they have high levels of self-esteem because staff are attentive and value their contributions. For example, following children's suggestions snack time is set up outside and they thoroughly enjoy a

picnic outdoors. Children's behaviour is good because staff set clear boundaries and have high expectations for all children in the pre-school. Children enjoy a range of creative activities, both indoors and outdoors; they paint the fence with water and are fascinated by the patterns when they flick the brushes. They explore how sticky tape can be wrapped round and round to make a ball, but that it gets stuck on their hand when they try to throw it.

Children learn about their own cultures and those of others; staff value children's home languages to ensure cultural diversity is embraced and respected. Children are confident communicators and they readily initiate conversations with adults and each other. They have daily opportunities to share and enjoy books, and their continuing interest in books is encouraged through a library system which allows them to take a book home to share with their parents. Children count with confidence and differentiate between big and small; they examine lengths of tape and notice that when it is pulled 'it gets bigger'. Children have many opportunities to write for purpose; some write their name on their work and younger children confidently make a mark to indicate own name. Children dictate captions for staff to write with their pictures and staff act as scribes as children make 'story maps' from their imagination. These simple activities lay firm foundations for children's future learning.

Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn and this enables them to provide challenging activities and practical experiences to support and extend each child's learning and development. Flexible planning is in place and is based on children's interests which mean staff can be responsive to children's changing needs and interests. Staff carry out regular observations of the children as they play and these are added to children's individual records. Parents also contribute what they know about their child from observations they carry out at home. This information is used effectively to identify the next steps in each child's learning and inform the planning of activities and experiences. However, children have fewer opportunities to see mathematical print and the written word in the outdoor area.

Children learn to feel safe because staff allow them to take some risk and ensure they can do so safely which means children are challenged to extend their physical skills and learn to take acceptable risks in a safe environment. Clear and detailed information is gathered about children's dietary requirements and health care plans are in place for children with specific health needs so that they can eat safely. However, handwashing procedures do not always ensure children learn about appropriate hygiene practices. All children enjoy healthy snacks which they competently help to prepare. They carefully cut up fruit and butter toast which promotes their independence skills and confidence. Children free-flow between indoor and outdoors throughout the day which gives them ample opportunities for energetic play. Children practise a range of movements as they climb, balance and crawl and they enjoy running around in the sunshine. This helps them to develop good muscle control, feel relaxed and develop a sense of overall well-being.

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	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

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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