

St Marys Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	253100
Inspection date	06/06/2011
Inspector	Janice Walker

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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 opened in 1976. It is run by a volunteer committee and operates from a building to the rear of St Mary's Church. The pre-school consists of one large room with associated facilities, along with a fully enclosed adjoining outdoor area. The setting serves families from the local and surrounding area. There are strong links with local schools.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and also on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is registered to provide care for 25 children under the age of eight years, all of whom may be in the early years age range. It is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years and is part of the pilot scheme providing free places for children aged two years. It is open each week day during school term times only. Opening hours are from 9.00am until 12.00pm and 12.45pm to 3.00pm. There is an optional lunch club which runs between these sessions. Children attend a variety of sessions each week depending on the individual requirements of each family. There are currently 39 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range.

The setting employs seven staff to work with the children, all of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

St Mary's Pre-School provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for children where each of them is valued as an individual. Policies and procedures are implemented effectively to support their well-being. Positive and friendly relationships with parents and effective links with local schools contribute well towards ensuring that every child's welfare and learning needs are met. Consequently, all children make good progress in their learning and development. The staff team are making good use of reflective practice as a tool to support the ongoing 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:

- ensure that the risk assessment includes relevant aspects of the outdoor environment such as hazardous plants
- review the organisation of daily routines to take account of the differing needs of individual children within the setting and tailor the approach to each child's needs, with regards to group activities such as snack times

- extend the skills and knowledge of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding children by attending relevant training for this role.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a safe environment with good security systems in place. There is a suitable range of policies and procedures which are used effectively to support the efficient management of the pre-school. Children are safeguarded due to robust recruitment and vetting procedures which help ensure the suitability of staff who deploy themselves effectively to ensure they are well supervised. Risk assessments contain a generally good level of detail and, along with daily checking procedures, are mainly effective in ensuring that potential hazards are identified and minimised. Some brambles though, have begun to grow in one of the planting areas in the garden which pose a potential hazard to children and have been overlooked. Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities relating to child protection and work in partnership with other agencies to ensure children are safeguarded. However, recent staff changes mean that whilst the designated individuals with lead responsibility for child protection have attended basic training, they have not attended training specifically for this role.

Parents value the positive relationships they develop with staff. They receive detailed information about the pre-school, initially through the parents' prospectus and initial visits and then through ongoing verbal exchanges, information boards and the monthly newsletter. Staff seek useful information about each child which help in establishing good relationships and enables them to respond effectively to their individual needs. This is particularly valued by parents of children with specific medical needs. Staff share information verbally about children's progress with more formal opportunities for discussion at the annual parents' evening. Parents have good opportunities for involvement in their child's learning through the parent committee. Additionally, parents from different cultural backgrounds have supported food tasting sessions and activities linked to festivals they celebrate at home. Parents who work for the emergency services have visited the setting in their professional role for the children to learn about their service. The pre-school has effective links with local schools to support a smooth transition when children move on.

Resources throughout are good and presented enticingly. Along with the warm and friendly staff team, this results in a welcoming and stimulating environment. The pre-school has acted on all the recommendations made at the last inspection resulting in improved safeguarding measures and children's progress is more effectively supported and monitored. The setting demonstrates a strong desire to provide a good quality service. The management team provide good support for staff through regular staff meetings and an appraisal system and staff regularly attend training to update and extend their skills and abilities. The system of self-evaluation which includes input from parents assists the effective monitoring and evaluation of the provision, therefore providing a good basis for supporting ongoing improvement.

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

Children are happy and settled in this pre-school where high priority is given to their individual needs. Staff gain detailed information from parents and use this well to ensure that the environment and all activities are accessible to all children. All staff have a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan a varied and interesting range of activities. They undertake ongoing observations of children which feed into children's individual assessment records. Key workers build a clear picture of their key children's abilities and use their knowledge well to provide activities which offer an appropriate level of challenge and which support each child's progress across all areas of their learning and development. Good use is made of the local community to bring a new dimension to children's learning. They perform plays in the local church and enjoy visitors to the setting for music times and to learn about differences and diversity through planned activities linked to festivals.

During free play times, children move around the activities provided, making independent choices about where they play. They confidently request additional resources such as string to make a spider's web or favourite small world animals and become engrossed in make-believe play. Staff listen to children and respond positively, providing resources to enable them to explore and investigate through activities based on their interests, such as a car wash in the outdoor area. Adult-led group times, such as, registration, story and meal times are well used to support their speaking and listening ability along with counting and calculating skills. For example, they play 'silly soup' games to develop an awareness of basic rhyming words and sing counting songs, developing an understanding of numbers. However, large group sessions are not always best planned to take into account the differing levels of ability of children present and the organisation of snack time is sometimes disruptive to the play and learning of some children.

Children develop good relationships with the warm and friendly staff team which results in them feeling safe, secure and confident to express their needs and wishes. They learn about possible dangers and how to stay safe through support and supervision in the use of tools, such as, knives and scissors along with planned activities such as visits by the Police and Fire services. Good hygiene practices, such as, those relating to changing nappies, help to minimise the risk of spreading infection. This is supported by good implementation of basic hygiene routines, such as, hand washing before meals and after using the toilet. The healthy eating policy is implemented effectively and children have regular and healthy snacks. Those who stay for lunch enjoy a balanced meal, supported by staff to eat the savoury foods first and any treats are saved until last. All children enjoy morning and afternoon sessions in the spacious outdoor area where there is a good range of equipment to support their developing coordination through running, climbing and balancing. Children generally behave well. They are engaged in interesting activities and receive high levels of attention from staff who are good role models. Daily routines, such as, tidy up times, along with gentle reminders from staff, encourage them to take care of their toys and play materials and small group

times support them well in learning to take turns and share. These skills will support children well in developing the skills they need for future learning.

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	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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met