

St Marys Church Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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13/07/2011

Inspector

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Setting address

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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 has been registered since 1991. The pre-school is managed by a committee and operates from a church hall in Plympton, near Plymouth, Devon. Children are cared for in the hall and a separate room, and have access to enclosed outdoor play areas. Pre-school sessions are available from 9.00am until 3.00pm, Monday to Friday. A parent and toddler group operates on Wednesdays from 1.00pm until 3.00pm, and a 'Rising School' group on Thursdays from 9.15am until 11.15am. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The setting may care for no more than 26 children under eight years; of these, not more than 26 may be in the early years age group, and of these, not more than 26 may be aged two and none aged under two years at any one time. There are currently 56 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age range. The pre-school is in receipt of early education funding for children aged three and four years. There are eight staff employed to work with the children, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Staff are dedicated to continuous professional development and improving childcare practice. They are rigorous in their self-evaluation and strive to enhance play opportunities for children. Consequently, children are exceptionally happy in the pre-school. They make excellent progress in their learning and development. Partnerships with parents and others are exemplary, which means that children's individual needs are effectively met in the inclusive setting. Comprehensive policies and procedures to promote children's well-being are in place, and mostly thorough in practise.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the hand washing procedures for children to ensure consistently effective hygiene practice.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are vigilant in their assessments of risks to children, which ensures that they provide very safe and secure care. Vetting and recruitment procedures are

rigorous, and complemented by thorough induction and appraisal systems. Staff are confident in their knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. They clearly inform parents of the safeguarding policy to protect children's welfare. Staff work closely with parents and have highly effective procedures to assess and promote children's individual development. They have an excellent awareness of each child's needs and background, ensuring integration and equality for children. Staff work exceptionally well together and have an excellent understanding of their roles and the ethos of the pre-school.

Planning and provision of learning opportunities for children is excellent. Staff are meticulous in their preparation to ensure that children are constantly engaged in play. Toys, games and books reflecting children's interests and backgrounds are readily accessible, which promotes inclusion and provides choice. Staff also use visual prompts throughout the sessions to support children's communication and decision making. Specific sessions are provided to target groups of children and focus clearly on their needs and development. For example, the 'Rising School' group prepares children effectively for school. This is complemented by highly effective transitional arrangements, with children visiting the primary school and school staff visiting the pre-school. Staff compile a book of photographs of the school, which helps children to recall the visit and feel secure about the change. Daily routines and activities promote children's good health. Children benefit from plenty of fresh air, exercise and healthy choices at snack time. Staff provide useful information for parents in respect of children's packed lunches; for example, they suggest alternative options to sugary or processed foods. Children are familiar with the hygiene routines, although at times they share bowls for hand washing, which is not consistently hygienic. Staff are highly effective in managing children's behaviour and promoting positive attitudes. They skilfully adapt behaviour programmes to suit the ages and abilities of pre-school children.

Staff implement thorough and comprehensive systems to observe, assess and plan for children's individual progress. They have an excellent awareness of children's interests and take account of their ideas. For instance, they immediately respond to children's ideas or requests during activities. Parents provide detailed information when children first attend, which contributes to initial assessment and planning. The key person system is extremely effective in promoting secure partnerships between parents and staff. Parents contribute to their children's records of development and are very well informed about welfare, activities and events. Regular newsletters include ideas for parents on how to extend children's learning at home. Staff actively seek parents views and receive excellent feedback on the questionnaires. At inspection, parents provided highly positive comments on the quality of care. They are extremely happy with the pre-school provision and their children's progress. Staff successfully evaluate their practice and identify key areas to further develop. Since the last inspection, staff and parents have worked together to significantly improve outdoor learning for children. They have created 'outdoor classrooms', enabling children to benefit fully in their learning at all times.

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

Children settle very well and are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. They are eager to play and pleased to see their friends. Children form secure attachments to staff and very good relationships with each other. From an early age, children show care and concern as they begin to understand about feelings and emotions. As they play, they consider what being angry, sad or happy looks like and means. For example, children use foam on a table top to swirl patterns, shapes and letters. They look at a picture of different faces and copy features to create images. Children behave exceptionally well and understand clearly what is expected of them. They readily share, take turns and show a very good understanding of responsibility. For instance, they are pleased to help with tasks, such as ringing the bell and holding up a picture to indicate a change. Children are nurtured by staff and show excellent development in levels of confidence, competence and self-esteem. They enjoy 'show and tell' time, proudly talking about what they have brought from home or been doing in the pre-school. Children take part in an innovative activity as 'star of the week' when their body shape is outlined. Children say kind things about one another that staff write onto the picture. All children feel valued and included as they learn to have respect for each other.

Children are engrossed and concentrate very well during activities. They are highly inquisitive; exploring, investigating and asking questions as they play. Story time is enhanced with the use of puppets, encouraging children to join in and respond with enthusiasm. They listen carefully and show a good understanding in the sequence of stories. Children know that the author writes the words, that the illustrator draws the pictures and that the book has to be read from front to back. Their learning is further demonstrated as they initiate their own puppet shows, putting on imaginative performances for staff and their friends. They tell the audience that they must buy a ticket and pay at the desk before the show begins. Other role play activities are enhanced with the provision of realistic resources. For example, staff provide real fruit and vegetables for the children's shop. Children also grow vegetables, such as peas, which they enjoy picking and eating for snack time. Baking activities enable children to weigh ingredients and consider consistencies. They try a wide variety of foods that link with healthy eating, traditions and cultures. Children are keen to play outside and readily explore their surroundings. They delight at finding worms in the ground and talking about birds in their nests. Children learn to understand risks in the outdoor area, such as being careful as they make their way between the plants in their 'woodland'. They play constructively and imaginatively as they create dens.

Physical play opportunities are extensive, both indoors and outside. Children use a wide range of tools and equipment throughout the sessions. They take part in music, movement and action games. Children ride wheeled toys skilfully around a course or designated area, which has replica road signs to reinforce children's awareness of safety. Staff also invite the police and fire service to the pre-school, which provides interesting experiences for children. All areas of children's development are exceptionally well promoted by staff. They make learning fun and inclusive, enabling all children to benefit from the activities available. Children

make independent choices, using photographs to help them if required. Signs and labels are used effectively to reflect dual language and promote inclusion. Children benefit from a very good balance of free play and adult-led activities, which help prepare children for school. For example, 'Rising School' children sit together with a member of staff and tap out rhythms to match the consonants in their names. They sing songs using mathematical language as they 'count down'. Children are thrilled to see a favourite puppet appear, who helps with their songs and stories. At the end, they say goodbye to the puppet and shake hands in turn, showing social skills and good manners. Children independently use the computer, competently playing age-appropriate educational games. They show a very good understanding as they move the cursor around the screen to achieve their goal. Early literacy skills are promoted consistently well. Children learn that print has meaning and also recognise and write their names. They make labels to place in different parts of the garden, such as to identify plants and vegetables.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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	2
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
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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