

# St Michael's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspector</b>	Fiona Robinson

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<b>Type of setting</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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 is run by a voluntary management committee. It has been open for over thirty years and was re-registered following a re-organisation in July 2003. It operates from a designated classroom within St Michael's Woolmer Green School, Woolmer Green, in Hertfordshire. All children share access to a secure, enclosed, outdoor play area and have the use of the host school's playground and outdoor environment. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language.

A maximum of 24 children aged from two to under five years may attend at any one time. Currently there are 42 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group and of these, 21 receive funding. The pre-school is open during term time on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to 3.15pm and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am to 1pm. Children come from the local and wider area and attend for a variety of the sessions on offer.

There are eight members of staff who work with the children. Of these, six hold National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 3 or above; one holds a NVQ at level 4 and is in the second year of an Early Years Foundation Stage degree; one is a qualified teacher; and one holds a NVQ at level 1 and is working towards level 3. The pre-school has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award and receives support from the local authority.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy the activities and achieve well in a bright, caring and stimulating environment. Staff have developed outstanding links with parents and carers and information is shared effectively with the host school. Children behave very well and are fully included in indoor and outdoor activities. Staff know the children well and help them to gain an excellent understanding of keeping healthy. The manager and staff evaluate the provision well and demonstrate a good commitment to continuous improvement.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop a clear overview of children's attainment on entry to the pre-school and the progress they make over time
- develop further partnerships with other early years settings, so that the next

steps in learning are shared effectively.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children's safety is protected well because staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues. They ensure that comprehensive policies, procedures and documentation are in place. Risk assessments are conducted regularly to keep children safe and are carefully recorded. There are robust staff recruitment and vetting procedures to make sure that all those having contact with the children are suitable. There are rigorous collection procedures in place which are known and followed carefully by staff and parents. Children are supervised well indoors and outdoors to ensure their safety and staff use a good range of equipment and resources that are safe and suitable for the children's ages. Fire evacuation procedures are practised regularly so that staff and children are familiar with the routine.

The pre-school is well-led and managed. There are good self-evaluation systems in place which have a positive impact on the children's experiences. Staff take the views of parents and children into consideration and act on these. Good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection. Children's independence is promoted well through play and they are encouraged to make individual choices in creative work. Staff actively promote equality and diversity and ensure children are integrated into activities, such as mixing cement for the castle. They have a clear idea of the areas for improvement, such as developing the layout and organisation of the indoor area. Staff make effective use of a good range of resources to meet most of the needs of the children. Although key staff monitor children's individual progress effectively to plan the next steps in learning, there is no clear overview of the children's attainment on entry and the progress they make over time. Information is shared effectively with the host school; however there is a limited exchanging of information with other pre-schools the children attend during the week which impacts on the knowledge of children's skill development and gains in learning.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. They are kept very well-informed of special events, such as Grandparents Day, Sports Day, the Nativity performance and fund raising activities. Information is shared regularly via informal discussion, newsletters, the website and the parents' notice board. Key staff monitor the children's achievements carefully and share their learning journals with parents on a regular basis. These are shared more formally at consultation meetings. Feedback from parents indicates that staff are very caring, enthusiastic and approachable and that communication is excellent. Partnerships with the host school are good and the pre-school benefits from the use of the playground and outdoor environment. Staff work hard to ensure that children experience a smooth transition into full-time education. There are good links with outside agencies that help the staff to meet the specific requirements of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, through advice and training opportunities. Partnerships

with other pre-schools are being developed with a focus on the sharing of good practice.

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

Children benefit from well-organised, purposeful play and make good progress. Planning is evaluated carefully and key staff use this information effectively to help children build on their existing skills. Staff value the children's ideas and include these in their planning and organisation of activities. Topics, such as family, autumn and castles enhance their experiences further and ensure they feel learning is enjoyable. Children behave very well because staff have a consistent approach to managing behaviour. They cooperate very well together as they play with water and sand, and are encouraged to be independent and confident in their choice of activity. Staff have high expectations and are excellent role models. They always offer very clear explanations so that children are able to understand their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions. Children feel a strong sense of involvement in the pre-school and learn to value other cultures, festivals and countries through activities, books and resources available to them. Staff tell them about life in France, festivals such as Diwali and they enjoy food tasting as part of their Chinese New Year celebrations.

Children develop an excellent understanding of keeping healthy. They learn about healthy eating and are encouraged to make healthy choices at snack time. Children eat a wide range of fruit and enjoy making fruit smoothies and fruit kebabs. They use equipment safely as they make sandwiches and choose healthy fillings. Their physical skills are developed very well as they balance on the climbing frame shaped like a helicopter and ride their bicycles and pedalled vehicles. Children have a good understanding of safety as staff regularly talk to them about how to avoid hazards and share safety posters made by children who previously attended pre-school. They ensure that children learn about fire and road safety and arrange talks from the police and fire services.

Children are eager to learn and make good progress. Their communication, language and literacy skills are developed well as they re-tell the story of 'Cinderella'. They enjoy talking about making safe decisions on Bonfire Night and tunefully sing 'Autumn Leaves are Falling Down'. Children are keen to practise their mark making in shaving foam and sand and most can write their own names by the time they leave pre-school. They are keen to practise their counting through singing songs such as 'Five Currant Buns' and counting the number of leaves they have collected. Children's creative skills are developed well as they print patterns using fruit and vegetables. They enjoy making wall hangings for their castle and building towers out of bricks. Children skilfully balance on a balance trail in their nature garden and swing safely from a rope. They are keen to go on bug hunts and build dens and sometimes go on nature walks in the field. Children achieve well as they sort and match gloves and squeal with delight as they explore the texture of green spaghetti. They enjoy coming to pre-school and staff prepare

them well for future learning experiences.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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