

St. Michaels Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 127613
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Inspector Beryl Witheridge

Setting address St. Michaels Church Hall, 2 High Road, DARTFORD, DA2
7EG

Telephone number 07765 024181

Email

Type of setting 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 Michaels Pre-school opened in 1977 and operates from one room in a church hall. It is situated in the village of Wilmington, in Dartford, Kent. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9.15am to 12.15pm term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register. Children come from a wide catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs eight staff including one cover staff and an administrator. Of these, four including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff promote the unique needs of each child; they support their welfare and learning. Children explore within safe boundaries and enjoy being with staff and one another, although they find it hard to listen in large groups. The partnerships between the setting and other agencies are very well established and help to ensure that the care and learning needs of the children are being met. The partnership with parents is excellent. Staff appraisals are not always used effectively. The setting uses self-evaluation to identify their strengths and areas for improvement and shows the capacity to maintain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- carry out regular staff appraisals to identify training needs of staff and provide a programme of continuing professional development to ensure that these needs are met
- devise ways of reducing noise levels and improving children's listening skills during large group activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively through the setting's policies, strategies and procedures, which help to promote their welfare at all times. Staff have an up-to-date understanding of child protection issues and their responsibility towards the children; they know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. Practices are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and continue to put children's welfare first. Systems for recruitment and vetting are robust and help to ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable and know their individual roles and responsibilities. Ongoing monitoring of staff performance through appraisals is not always used effectively and they are not carried out on a regular basis. Risk assessment is clear. It covers all areas of the setting and daily checks help to identify and minimise the risk of accidental injury to children. There are also clear risk assessments for each outing.

The setting are constantly looking at ways to improve the outcomes for the children, they review their ways of working constantly. Parents, children and staff all have an input into the evaluation and this enables the setting to have a good overview of their setting and the needs of all those who use it. The staff reflect on their practice, look at the overall strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for improvement. They work with the schools improvement partner from the local authority to put plans for improvement into place. They are able to maintain continuous improvement; this helps to promote the outcomes for the children.

Resources are not all freely accessible to the children as it is not possible to put out all the toys and equipment every day. Staff provide children with a resources book so they are able to make decisions about what they would like to play with. There are trolleys which provide children with choices such as the tools and equipment for the art and craft area. Toys are rotated so that over a few weeks children will have access to all the available equipment ensuring that they do not get bored. Areas such as the home corner are changed regularly into an office, a hospital or hairdressers thus encouraging the children's imaginations and role play.

Equality and diversity is embedded into everyday practice. Staff monitor their practices to ensure the needs of all children are supported. Children learn about their own home and family as well as the diversity in society. They are able to discuss their differences and similarities. They learn about each others backgrounds and celebrations. The needs and wishes of all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their families are fully addressed. All experiences are available to all children, providing them with opportunities to learn and develop.

A good working partnership with others supports the needs of individual children. For example, the setting works with other agencies and professionals who are involved in the care of the children and their families. Effective liaison helps to offer children continuity of care and learning.

Children benefit from an excellent and effective partnership working between the

staff and their parents. Staff work closely with parents and share a range of information about their child, the setting, the policies and procedures with them. Parents feel their children are extremely well cared for by staff who know them well. They are very happy with their children's progress and the care given. Children's observations and assessments in their 'My Special Book' are shared with the parents on a termly basis. They are able to speak to their child's key worker and are fully included in their future learning. They also complete their own observations of activities the children are involved in at home; bringing home and the setting closer together. Parents speak of the setting and the staff in glowing terms and cannot praise them enough. They described staff as friendly, approachable and professional.

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

Children show they feel safe. They are happy, settled and secure because staff provide close care, are attentive and respond swiftly to their needs. They sit with the children either on the floor or at the table. They know when to step in to help and support the children but they also know when to stand back and let the children lead the play. They encourage children's language and understanding through asking relevant questions. They provide them with resources to support their play such as the pictures of lorries and road works outside on the fence when children are riding their bikes. They also develop their understanding of road safety by having traffic lights for the children to use; they all know when to stop and when to go. Staff provide cuddles and hugs to children if they are upset. Individual needs and interests are identified and recorded when the children first start at the group. Starting points are clearly recorded and cover all areas of learning. This is used to base their future learning on. Staff make clear and relevant observations and assessments and identify children's next steps in learning. They use these next steps to lead future planning. Planning is done on a daily basis taking account of children's needs and interests. Tracking children's development is very clear from the records in 'My Special Book'.

The resources are organised into accessible and attractive areas, the imaginative play area, the book/quiet area, messy play area, and construction area. Children are able to make decisions about what they want to play with, as well as taking part in some adult-led activities. Children are able to access computers; they are supported by an adult but show how competent they are at using the mouse and playing the games. They receive a lot of praise for doing well. Children enjoy singing and dancing; they take part in action rhymes and exercises, they then break into smaller groups for singing and story time. When they are in large groups children find it difficult to listen to each other. Children show a great delight in books. They will select a story and read to themselves or share it with friends. They are very good at repeating the stories and explaining exactly what is happening. Children take turns and share well, two children are playing in 'the office'; the younger of the two is not sure how to use an old fashioned phone so the older child gives her the mobile and he uses the phone. They have a long discussion on the phone and use the pens and paper to take 'notes' of their

conversation.

Children have access to an outdoor play area which they use on a daily basis. They also have access to local areas such as the farm. They have visits from many different people such as the fire brigade, the police, a dance teacher and recently were able to hold and handle some animals such as ferrets, tarantulas and lizards. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is being developed in many ways.

Children are being introduced to healthy eating, they have a milk bar where they serve themselves and pour their own drinks of water or milk. They are offered daily choices of fruit as well as foods such as crackers or toast which they are able to put their own toppings on. They are beginning to understand the importance of good hygiene such as washing their hands before they touch the food, to get rid of the germs. Staff follow good standards of hygiene and are good role models to the children.

Effective behaviour management procedures ensure that children are learning to develop responsibility for their actions. They play cooperatively together and respond well to praise and encouragement. This gives them the incentive to do well as they develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Any issues are dealt with instantly in a calm and quiet way by staff. Staff are good role models to the children; they are always polite and encourage the children in all they do. Overall, an inclusive and welcoming service is provided.

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	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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