

St Marys Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	129391
Inspection date	07/03/2012
Inspector	Sheila Harrison

Setting address	St Marys School, New Road, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 3QL
Telephone number	01442 389040
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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. Marys Pre-school is operated by a charity consisting of parents and trustees. It registered in 1997 and operates from the nursery classroom of St. Mary's Church of England School in Northchurch, Berkhamsted. The setting serves the local area and has strong links with the school. The setting is accessible to all children and they share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area with the school reception class.

The setting opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 1.15pm until 3.30pm. There is a lunch club for nursery school children from 11.45am to 1.00pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 40 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs eleven members of child care staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at Level 3. One member of staff has an Early Years Foundation Degree. There is one regular volunteer who has Qualified Teacher Status. One member of staff is working towards an early years qualification at Level 3. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy their time in the pre-school and they make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have forged excellent links with the parents and the school. The pre-school is fully inclusive and support children's understanding and respect for others. Staff positively promote the health and safety of the children and staffing is generally well organised to meet the individual needs of the children. Staff continually strive to improve the provision through careful reflection on their practice. As a result the setting is well placed to maintain and sustain continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that sufficient adults looking after children in the lunch club hold full and relevant qualifications (Suitable People).

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

- work collaboratively within the setting to incorporate the lunch club and the sharing of knowledge and skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are strong, regularly reviewed and carefully managed. All the records required for the safe and efficient management of the early years provision are maintained and effective. Effective processes are in place for identifying and supporting any child at risk of harm. The suitability of staff looking after children is ensured with robust recruitment and appraisal processes. All staff attend first aid and safeguarding training. Children attending the lunch club enjoy the social meal time and outside play in the existing nursery garden. However, the lunch club is not an integral part of the afternoon session. Not all lunch time staff are included in the planning and review systems and there are insufficient trained staff on duty to meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and assure children's welfare. The accommodation is well suited to its purpose and conducive to learning. Furniture, equipment and resources are of high quality and suitable for the ages of the children to support their development.

Leaders and managers are successful in inspiring the staff team to secure improvement. Staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Recommendations from the last inspection have been effectively addressed. Plans for the future are skilfully targeted to bring about further development of the provision and positive outcomes for children. Staff constantly reappraise the snack time to ensure there are good opportunities for children to communicate freely. Recent questionnaires from parents and input from team meetings are collated and assessed to inform the excellent self-evaluation system.

Staff promptly identify a child's need for additional support, sharing information and records with colleagues, parents and, where appropriate, with interagency teams to ensure that each child gets the help he or she needs. Children's progress is carefully monitored to ensure that there is no underachievement. Staff keep in contact with local providers to ensure consistency of care and there is a strong relationship with the school. Children frequently attend school events to ensure a seamless transition to the nursery class.

There are clear and accessible channels for parents and carers to communicate with the setting. Parents are well informed about all aspects of their own children's achievement, well-being and development. They are encouraged to frequently view their child's records and add comments of their learning at home. Staff ensure that the setting is accessible to all parents by having 'open days' in the evenings, afternoons and at weekends. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in running the setting through the management committee and the annual general meeting. On starting at the setting, parents spend time with the key worker allowing staff to get to know the child's current stage of development, their

family, their likes and dislikes. Parents are encouraged to share their skills to help children learn about the society in which they live. A parent came to play a viola and parents share their celebrations and festivals with the children.

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

Children are happy and fully involved in their play. Assessment is through high quality observations and this information is used effectively to guide future plans for the next steps in children's learning. The educational programme reflects the rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of all children very well. Staff have a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and planned activities are linked to the children's interest. Children are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities indoors and outside. They enjoy mark making and are proud of their achievements when using paper and pencil and, on a larger more active scale, on the whiteboard with pens. Children are developing the skills to be creative and think critically. During the lunch club session, they compare the sounds of the water dripping through the canopy and into different sized buckets.

Staff are diligent in supporting learning through storytelling and questioning that helps to develop and extend communication skills. Children greatly enjoy listening to traditional tales using books, puppets and songs. They can recall the story and reinforce this learning as they play out the stories using the puppets themselves. Children behave well and show respect for each other. The older children help the younger children learn as they talk about caring for the plants they have grown in the nursery garden.

Children have many valuable chances to learn about the wider world as they welcome visitors to the setting. A visitor gave an inspiring session on her use of crutches and a wheel chair. Parents visit wearing traditional clothes and bring actual artefacts used in celebrating festivals that are important to them. A member of staff brought in her pet snake to help children learn about caring for living things.

Children's health is well promoted. Children discuss healthy eating during the lunch club and they like the staff to read the jokes on the food packets. This helps them to see writing for a purpose in an amusing way. Children have a growing awareness of good hygiene routines. They sing a hand washing song that requires them to rub all parts of their hands with soap before snack time. They are learning to keep themselves safe with the visit from the school road crossing patrol who bought her stop sign for them to see. Children participate in the emergency evacuation practice undertaken by the school and pre-school. They enjoy taking their soft toy, Fireman Bear, outside with them.

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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