

St Michaels Playgroup

St Michaels Hall, Routh Lane, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 4NY

Inspection date	20/09/2012
Previous inspection date	15/10/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Self-evaluation is robust. The manager and staff team demonstrate an ambitious commitment to providing the highest levels of achievement for all children.
- Effective performance management and the promotion of professional development ensures that children take part in highly positive experiences with good opportunities for quality learning.
- Children's language development is given a very high priority. Support for those children who require additional support is highly effective. Staff track language development very closely in the group and any delay is tackled early.
- The key person system develops a genuine bond with children and offers a settled, close relationship. This helps children to become familiar with the routines of the group and to feel confident to explore and to try out new things.
- Teaching is motivating and engages all children for long periods of time. Staff ask questions to challenge children in their learning and good quality interactions allow children to learn new skills through self-directed play. This prepares children well for the next stage in their learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for children to extend their independence by promoting care skills further during routines in the day, such as snack time, are not fully embedded into practice.
- Staff have not built sufficiently on the ways that children manage their own feelings

and deal with anger or disappointment by providing them with opportunities to name and talk about a wide range of feelings.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with the manager and several staff members
- The inspector observed activities in the two main rooms of the group and areas of the outdoor play space.
The inspector looked at children's learning journeys, planning documentation, the settings self-evaluation form/action plan and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector also took account of the views of two parents spoken to on the day, and took into account notes in the complaints log and information provided by parents in the comments book.

Inspector

Melissa Cox

Full Report

Information about the setting

St Michaels Playgroup opened in 1965 and registered in 1992. It is located in the church hall of St. Michael's Church in Tilehurst, near Reading. It is committee run. The pre-school

has the use of the main hall, side rooms, a large enclosed outdoor area and a purpose built smaller outdoor area. Children who attend the pre-school live in the local and surrounding area.

St. Michael's pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register for up to 30 children from the age of two years old. There are currently 37 children on roll in the early years age range. The pre-school offers funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four years. The pre-school is able to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school is open during term time, Monday to Friday from 9.15am until 12.15pm. A total of seven members of staff are employed to work with the children. Of these, six staff currently hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- support children in understanding their feelings and those of others by labelling emotions and involve children in finding solutions to problems and conflicts by provide activities that help children to develop safe ways of dealing with anger and other strong feelings.
- build in opportunities during the day for children to build on their self-care skills by allowing children to practise pouring their own drinks and serving their own food, and making available resources for example, a dustpan and brush at the sand play, to enable children to take responsibility for the safety of others and their environment while they play.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are enthusiastic and keen learners who make good progress in both the prime and specific areas of learning. They relish their time at the group and spend considerable amounts of time engaged in chosen activities with their friends. They are well supported by staff, responding well to the interesting and challenging activities. Children demonstrate the ability to work effectively both in groups and independently. The environment inside and outside is used well to provide children with opportunities to choose from a range of play experiences. Staff set out a range of equipment for the children but on occasions this limits children's creativity and problem solving processes. This is because staff miss the opportunity to allow children to build the equipment

themselves. For example, children negotiate an obstacle course, jumping, climbing and balancing on the equipment. However, they do not have the opportunity to design the course themselves to promote their sense of shared thinking as they explore ideas in the design. Planning supports free-flow play opportunities between the main hall and the wonderfully resourced garden area. This enhances the learning of those groups of children who have a preference is for outdoor learning.

On-going assessment plays a dynamic part in children's learning and development process in the group. Staff have high expectations of what children are capable of achieving and observations of children in their play allow staff to understand children's level of achievement, interest and learning styles. Staff use this information effectively to shape learning experiences for all children. Planning is effective in meeting the individual needs of all the children. It is based on accurate observations of children's skills, abilities and progress. Staff interactions are positive and teaching stems from a secure knowledge and understanding of how children play and learn best. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that children choose for themselves and levels of support are high.

Children's progress in language and communication is secure and all children develop confidence in speaking and listening. Children learn new words very rapidly as staff regularly model language in a range of contexts such as board games or role play. Children listen attentively in a range of situations and respond well to what they hear. For example, children actively participate in a group story time by predicting key events and joining in with repeated phrases as the story develops. Staff enhance story time with props and promote the experience further as they follow the children's lead in the conversation. This helps children think about things together as a group and make links to their own experiences. Staff value and support children's thoughts and contributions and as a result, they become confident speakers. Support for all groups of children, including those with those with special educational needs and English as an additional language is focused and appropriate interventions are sought when needed. This ensures they get the earliest support to help them achieve. As a result, all groups of children make equally good progress given their starting points, preparing them well for their transition to school.

The group works hard to engage with parents and help them understand how to support their children's learning at home. Children bring in photos of family members and pets, which staff place on a display board in order to discuss and value children's home experiences. Families regularly discuss their child's progress, for example at group coffee mornings where they have freshly baked biscuits made by the children, while they view children's learning journeys. The good partnerships develop further as children take home story and rhyme time sacks and are encouraged to read or act out stories at home with their parents.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Staff are united in promoting a caring and supportive atmosphere, where children feel welcome and safe. Excellent relationships with all adults help children to settle quickly and learn to work and play well together. Settling in procedures are supportive of all children's needs. When a new child is left for the first time, staff provide high levels of support which in turn promotes secure emotional attachments. Relationships are strong at all levels. There is a highly successful implementation of the key person system, along with good staff ratios and staff deployment. This provides all children with a strong sense of belonging and the support they need.

Children have a good understanding of safety and behave well. Children gain an understanding of risk as they explore their environment. They show off their developing skills as they negotiate the outdoor areas, carefully pedalling around their friends or controlling a game of football. They are happy to take turns, work together and share resources. However, on occasions some children find it hard to manage their feelings and behaviour. Staff are very kind in their response to these occasions. However, they do not always model or provide further ways to involve children in finding solutions to these problems and conflicts. Overall, children's behaviour shows that they feel safe in the group. They are able to ask for help or share their worries with staff, who in turn will give them sensitive support.

There are well-established routines to promote children's personal and social development in their care needs, such as hand-washing and dressing appropriately to go outside. However, the staff do not promote independence well during group snack time. This means children do not have the opportunity to be involved in the preparation of snack or in serving it. Children demonstrate a growing respect for others, living things and the environment. There are some good opportunities for children to contribute to the care of the environment. Children miss some learning experiences such as taking responsibility during a sand play activity. This is because the lack of a dustpan and brush limits the children's ability to sweep up sand off the floor.

Children learn about making healthy choices as they develop their understanding of healthy eating while making choices from a healthy selection at snack time. Good support is given to those children who have allergies or dietary needs because staff work very closely with parents to make children feel included. Overall, staff provide a stimulating and welcoming environment where each child receives a happy and enjoyable experience that secures their future learning.

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

Leadership and management are good because the manager has the drive and ambition to secure changes that result in improved outcomes for all children. The staff team work tirelessly to make the required improvements and addressing all areas for development identified at the previous inspection. Highly effective systems are in place for evaluating the practise in the setting at all levels and careful monitoring underpins the success of the group. Self-evaluation is very accurate and thorough with an effective tracking system

helping to identify and redress any underachievement quickly. The effective monitoring of staff performance through appraisals and observations of practice results in improvements in the quality of teaching. Access to regular training means that staff are consistent with their practices. This demonstrates a commitment to developing their knowledge and skills to enhance outcomes for children in their care. Overall, there is a good capacity to maintain this positive direction.

Safeguarding practices are strong. All staff have a secure understanding of current child protection procedures and the reporting procedure to follow if they have a concern about a child. They have all attended recent training. The staff maintain and share clear information and records with other professionals when necessary, to support children's welfare and learning. Staff are vigilant in supervising the children to promote their welfare and safety at all times. Recruitment and safety practices within the group are robust and well promoted. The pre-school meets all statutory responsibilities.

The group is very effective in acting on the views of parents and carers in helping them to support their children's learning further at home. The pre-school seeks parents' views informally through discussion and more formal processes, such as the comments box or parent rota system. The group liaise closely with a wide range of professionals and work together to support children and their families.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.

Not Met

The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children’s learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	509277
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	814330
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	37
Name of provider	St Michaels Pre-School
Date of previous inspection	15/10/2008
Telephone number	01189 429 391 or 07738 550955

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted’s website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

