

St Mary's Pre School

St. Marys Church, George Street, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 0EG

Inspection date

14/11/2013

Previous inspection date

21/01/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

4

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 3

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- The management of the pre-school is not effectively supporting the safeguarding and welfare requirements, including the organisation of the committee, the availability of records and the recruitment system. These are breaches of requirements and results in a failure to maintain children's safety and their welfare.
- The monitoring of the pre-school lacks rigour with planning not always focusing on the gaps in children's learning, resulting in staff sometimes being insufficiently focused on helping children make the best possible progress.
- Staff do not always offer sufficient challenges for older more able children to enable them to make as much progress as they can.

It has the following strengths

- Staff are responsive to children's well-being. They carry out home visits that parents find very helpful and supportive. This approach ensures that the settling-in process is flexible and helps children form close bonds and secure attachments.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playroom and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager of the provision and the chair of the committee.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children and the provider's self-evaluation form.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Sheila Harrison

Full report

Information about the setting

St Mary's Pre School was registered in 2002 and is on the Early Years Register. It operates from one large hall in St Mary's Church Centre in central Watford and is run by a committee made up of church members, staff and parents. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above, including one with Early Years Professional Status.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday term time only. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 22 children attending, who are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who are learning English as an additional language.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- make sure the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are understood, so that recruitment of staff is robust, committee procedures are fully appropriate and records are complete and available for inspection
- improve the monitoring of groups of children, so that achievements in relation to their expected levels of development are recognised and use this information in the planning of the educational programmes and children's individual next steps
- ensure activities are adapted, so they are challenging but achievable for all children but especially for the older, more able children.

Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their time at pre-school and are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use suitable teaching methods to generally inspire children's learning as they provide activities linked to children's interest of 'under the sea'. Children enjoy making shapes from salt dough that are linked to sea creatures. Staff help children observe the changes in these materials as it dries on the window ledge and staff plan to extend this activity by offering children the opportunity to paint their work and then take it home. This helps children's to be eager to develop and practise new skills. Staff provide music activities that interest younger children. They move confidently to the music, joining in with the actions and singing. This helps develop their coordination, sense of rhythm and an eagerness to be involved. However, the educational programmes and planned activities are not sufficiently challenging for older and more able children leaving them, at times, wandering around with little to do. This does not help children make as much progress as they can and does not fully help them in preparation for school.

Staff make regular observations and assessments of children's learning and progress and they use the assessments to plan activities for children. However, this is not consistently adapted for all children. For example, some identified gaps in children's understanding are not fully recognised in the future planning to help rapidly close the gaps in children's learning. However, generally, children's language skills are well promoted. Staff use their home language to help support children feel comfortable and ready to learn. They provide picture cards to help children with emerging language and those learning English as an additional language to communicate their needs. Children enjoy looking at books and staff respect their request for a book from the book case. Staff choose stories for story time linked to children's interest and this helps children to develop their confidence to speak out in a small group.

Parents provide some information on children's starting points development during the home visits. This helps staff understand each child's stage of development as they start in the pre-school, including some useful information on their families and home languages. This is a strong aspect of the pre-school and helps children quickly take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by staff. Parents are invited into the pre-school to see their children's development folders and discuss progress with their key person, including the assessment processes, such as the 'progress check at age two'. This two-way flow of information helps support children's learning at home.

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

The lack of awareness of all statutory requirements to check the ongoing suitability of staff means that safeguarding measures are not fully robust. This has the potential to compromise children's well-being. However, there is a calm and comfortable atmosphere where staff encourage children to build a strong rapport with their key person. Staff and parents report that the home visit, prior to children starting, is very helpful in helping staff to be prepared to meet children's individual needs and help them settle more easily. For example, staff introduce short sessions for children that find leaving their parent more difficult. This works successfully as children stay a little longer at pre-school as their confidence grows. Parents report they know and speak to their child's key person regularly and this helps them to feel welcome.

Staff encourage children to behave well. They are good role models showing children respect and saying 'please' and 'thank you'. They guide children sensitively to learn to take turns when using the popular equipment, such as the tricycles. Staff use a sand timer, so children can see when their turn has ended. This helps to reduce the incidents of conflict and frustration. Children are gently encouraged to sit and listen carefully at story time. Staff provide school uniforms in the dressing-up materials and read stories about 'starting school' in the summer term before children start school and this helps children to be ready for the move onto school.

Staff offer good support to help children learn about healthy lifestyles. Children are encouraged to develop their independence. Staff urge children to put on their own coats and gently guide them to try to do zips for themselves. They enjoy using the play equipment in the outdoor play space, learning to walk and balance on the low stilts safely. Staff lead children in enjoyable games where children have great fun and can follow instructions, such as to run with the call 'runner beans' and jump with the call 'jumping beans'. This helps children begin to see the physical and emotional effect of physical exercise. Staff are aware of children's likes, dislikes and allergies through the discussions with parents at the home visits. Children are encouraged to bring a piece of fruit each morning to share with their friends and this helps children learn about a healthy diet. Children are reminded not to lift chairs up high and this helps them to begin to be aware of the safety for themselves and others.

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

The management are not fulfilling their responsibilities in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The status of the committee is unclear and they are unsure that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities. The committee and management support new staff to be ready for their work at the pre-school through the thorough induction systems to prepare staff for their new roles at the pre-school. However, they are unaware of the required safeguarding procedures that include ensuring the records relating to the recruitment and suitability of staff are available for inspection. Therefore, the committee cannot confirm that staff are suitably qualified for their role. This is a breach of a legal requirement and impedes the safe management of the pre-school. Staff undertake training in child protection and are clear about their duty to raise any concerns to protect children in their care. They understand the various ways to raise any concerns and speaking out if they have any concerns about the practice in the pre-school.

The committee undertakes a rudimentary review of the pre-school to assess the strengths and the areas for improvement. Actions and recommendations made at previous inspections are acceptably addressed. The committee and staff were actively involved in liaising with other local bodies to provide an outside playspace for children. The staff group, in conjunction with the feedback from the parents review of the effectiveness of the routine. For example, they have reviewed the operation of snack time and decided that it is currently working as children can sit and have a conversation with their friends.

The managers undertake suitable monitoring of staff and provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues relating to the welfare of children. Staff are encouraged to undertake training for professional childcare qualifications and improve the opportunities for children by introducing ideas from their course into their practice. They review the planning and assessment of children's learning. However, staff do not always notice the gaps in children's learning when reviewing the tracking sheets to ensure children are making as much progress as they can.

Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection report that they are happy with the service the pre-school provides. A parent commented how she appreciated the home visit from the staff in helping her and her child became more confident in the separation process. The managers have suitable working relationships with other professionals to ensure children are referred for further support, if required.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. 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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	EY217236
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	870727
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	22
Name of provider	St.Marys Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	21/01/2009
Telephone number	01923 240368

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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.

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