

St. Mary's Pre-school

St. Mary's Church Hall, St. Mary's Road, Wootton, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 9HB

Inspection date	13/01/2014
Previous inspection date	24/02/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	2
	Previous inspection:	2
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

- Staff teach children about early mathematics through modelling language and helping children to understand size, shape and colour.
- Staff track children's progress well, in order to monitor their achievements and plan for their next steps in learning effectively.
- Staff are warm and affectionate with children helping them to feel secure when they are unsettled.
- Staff demonstrate a good awareness of how to keep children safe in their care.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Some children choose to play imaginatively as superheroes, which includes play fighting. Staff discourage this, meaning that children are unable to explore this type of play safely with suitable rules.
- Staff collect a wide range of additional data about children's progress and learning but do not fully share this information with parents to further enhance their ability to support children's learning at home.

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 main room and garden.
- The inspector had discussions with parents, staff and children.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation, including children's records, safeguarding procedures and self-evaluation.
- The inspector had a meeting with the manager and registered person of the pre-school.

Inspector

Hayley Marshall

Full report

Information about the setting

St Mary's Pre-School was registered in 1967 on the Early Years Register. It is managed by a voluntary committee, in partnership with St Mary's Church. The pre-school operates from one main room and an enclosed outdoor area in St Mary's Church Hall in the village of Wootton, Bedfordshire. It serves the local area and is accessible to all children.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, from 9am until 12 noon with an optional lunch club from 12 noon until 12.45pm everyday. However, the second Monday of each month the pre-school closes at 12 noon. On Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays there is an afternoon session from 12pm until 3pm. On Tuesdays, the pre-school opens in the afternoon until 3.45pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 44 children attending who are within 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 speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager and three further staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two further staff hold a level 2 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- find constructive ways for children to exercise their desire to play superhero and play fighting type games; for example, through role play, dressing-up and making resources to support this type of play
- utilise the data staff collect about children's progress even further by sharing it with parents to further enhance their ability to support children's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

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

Staff plan activities for children, which helps them to learn in all areas of the curriculum. They provide a balance of activities, which are led by adults and children. This means that children become confident to try new things and develop the positive attitudes towards learning they will need when they start school. Children develop the small muscles in their fingers as they use stencils and hole punchers to make patterns. They hold pencils with good control as staff guide their learning ensuring they are able to make marks and

practise their early writing skills. When children want to extend their ideas further, they ask staff for more resources, such as scissors and glue. This shows that children are usually able to lead their learning in the way they choose. However, some children like to play superhero and play fighting as part of their imaginative development. Staff discourage this, meaning that children are unable to see their ideas to a full conclusion. For example, by staff introducing rules and encouraging children to make resources to support this type of play. Children enjoy playing physically in the garden where they pedal bikes, climb and play in sand as they enjoy the freedom of movement in the large open space.

Staff teach children to become aware of early mathematics in their everyday activities. This increases children's familiarity of shape, size and space. When playing with puzzles, staff encourage children to rotate the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle and ask them to compare the sizes. Children pick these concepts up quickly and become successful in matching shapes to spaces. Staff model language throughout the day. They understand their role in supporting children's communication skills and focus upon speaking clearly and in a concise manner to support children who speak English as an additional language. When children become competent speakers, staff ask them complicated sentences, which require them to think about their answers, building their own vocabulary in the process. Children enjoy singing songs and listening to stories as part of their routine, further enhancing their communication and language. They play in groups as they look at small world figures and play on the computer. This enhances their good understanding of the world in which they live. As result, children are confident to talk with others and keen to express their ideas.

Staff observe children and use these observations to make assessments about their progress. They encourage parents to share information when children first start at the pre-school to determine their individual starting points. This enables them to effectively build upon what children already know and encourages all children's good progress. When children have special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff develop individual plans for their learning in consultation with other professionals. This helps to tailor activities that support children's unique needs. Staff develop relationships with parents where they feel confident to share their children's learning from home. Parents regularly take home children's development files and enjoy consultations with staff about how and what children are learning. Noticeboards contain a summary at the end of the session to enable parents to find out about children's learning at a glance. Staff use the information they gather to collect data which enables them to look at children's progress by gender and individual groups. They use this effectively to assess the delivery of the curriculum, recognise any groups that are in need of extra support and build upon children's needs. This information also shows when children have aspects of their development, which need enhancing further. Staff focus upon this at the pre-school. However, they do not yet share this information with parents to enable them to further build upon children's good learning at home.

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

Pre-school staff form warm relationships with children. When children become unsettled after a holiday period, staff comfort them and are attentive towards their needs. This means that children feel secure as they adjust to attending the pre-school and develop the emotional readiness to learn well. Close working with parents and families helps children to feel safe and content at the pre-school. Each key person knows their children well, enabling them to plan effectively for their learning. Staff work closely with others who care for children, such as childminders, to make sure children experience continuity in their day. Staff are available to talk to parents when they arrive in the morning and at the end of the session to exchange information, which might affect children's moods and feelings. Children display high esteem as they are able to make their wishes known and choose resources to play with. When they are ready to start school, staff invite teachers from the local school to discuss children's progress. This means that children experience a smooth move into formal education.

Children develop an awareness of food groups and good choices because staff teach them about healthy food. Children and staff talk about their likes and dislikes. At snack time, children eat a range of fruit and vegetables. The regular exercise that children have through outdoor play, helps them to understand that this is part of a healthy routine. Children develop independence as they dress themselves for going outdoors to play. They find wellington boots and their coats and attempt to put these on themselves before staff help them if needed.

Children become competent in managing risks for themselves as staff encourage them to use tools, such as scissors, in their everyday activities. When playing outdoors, children notice that the floor is wet and slippery and moderate their movement to prevent slipping. When children climb on benches around the main room, staff encourage them to get down and explain to them why this is not safe. Children behave well at the pre-school. Staff provide clear boundaries and structure to the day, so children know what to expect. Staff teach children 'golden rules' to help them to understand why they need to behave in certain ways. They intervene if children need extra support to guide or distract them. Therefore, children play together well and are content and confident as a result.

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

Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. Regular training and available policies and procedures help staff to know and understand their role. Staff recognise the signs and symptoms, which might cause them concern about children's welfare and what action they should take to pass on any such concern. Staff review all the areas where children play to identify and minimise any risks to children. The pre-school has a low staff turnover and therefore, infrequent need for staff recruitment. Regardless, the pre-school has a robust procedure for recruiting and inducting new staff, which they review on a regular basis. This includes ensuring that all required checks are complete before staff begin work with children to confirm their suitability to do so. Staff supervision is supportive and yearly appraisals identify targets. This motivates staff and identifies their training needs.

Staff maintain a programme of professional development to refresh and update their knowledge and skills. When need arises, staff undertake further training to meet children's individual requirements. This ensures they have good understanding of how to administer medication to children safely. Senior staff use effective tracking to review the progress children make and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. This builds a clear picture of any area where children need extra support and provides staff with information about areas of strength. This is one of many ways that the pre-school reviews and evaluates care for children. Working closely with local authority development workers enables staff to audit aspects of the pre-school and sustain good quality of care for children. Parents share their views through regular questionnaires and staff encourage children to share their ideas through discussion. The pre-school has thoroughly addressed recommendations from the previous inspection, demonstrating their positive attitude to continual improvement for the benefit of children.

Staff complete comprehensive records of children learning. Parents take children's records home frequently to read and contribute readily to them. Staff complete progress checks at age two years, summarising children's achievements. When children start at the pre-school, staff request information from their previous childcare provider as well as parents, so staff know what children can do. The pre-school builds close relationships with childminders who also provide care for children to foster continuity. Staff work closely with the local children's development centre when children have specific needs. Together, they put into place plans for support. This helps to make sure that all children make good progress relevant to their starting points. Parents are confident in the capability and professionalism of staff. They feel that children enjoy attending the pre-school because of the consistent care they receive.

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	219115
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	865776
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	32
Number of children on roll	44
Name of provider	St Mary's Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	24/02/2009
Telephone number	01234 767158

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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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