

St Michael's Pre-School Nursery

Recreation Centre, Recreation Field, The Green, Dalston, CARLISLE, CA5 7QB

Inspection date	22/01/2014
Previous inspection date	14/05/2010

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
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		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Relationships between children and staff are warm, caring and supportive. Consequently, children are happy, secure and settled at the pre-school.
- Staff have established effective partnerships with parents and others, which make an efficient contribution to children's individual care, learning and development.
- Staff offer positive praise to children when they persist and overcome challenges in their self-chosen play. This helps children to gain a sense of pride in their achievements.

It is not yet good because

- Experiences do not always challenge or engage children as well, this maybe due to some areas of learning are less well-planned for and the use of resources is not fully effective.
- Monitoring of children's assessment is not consistently rigorous. This results in, learning experiences that are not fully matched to children's individual needs and stage of development.
- Children's independence is not fully encouraged during routine tasks, such as at snack and mealtimes.
- Self-evaluation is not precise or thorough enough and does not fully include the views of parents, staff and children, to assist in identifying targets for improvement.

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 playroom and the outdoor learning environment.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision and several members of staff.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of staff working with children.

Inspector

Donna Parkinson

Full report

Information about the setting

St Michael's Pre-School Nursery was registered in its current premises in 2007 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in a recreation hall in the Dalston area of Cumbria, and is managed by a voluntary management committee. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from one main playroom and there are enclosed areas available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday, Wednesday and Friday term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 34 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 children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- ensure high quality learning experiences are provided for all children by identifying how planning and the use of resources can consistently engage and challenge the children to make best progress across all areas of learning.

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

- implement rigorous and effective systems for self-evaluation that include the views of children, parents and staff to inform priorities and set challenging targets for improvement that supports children's achievements over time
- encourage children to further develop their independence during daily routines, for example, by choosing, preparing and serving themselves at meal and snack times
- improve the monitoring of planning and assessment to ensure that it is more rigorous in identifying all circumstances where intervention, additional support and challenge may be required to promote and progress individual children's learning and development.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are happy, secure, settled and familiar in the routines of the pre-school. Staff know children well and consequently, children build warm and positive relationships with their key person and other staff. Staff have a sound understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how children learn and play, and as a result, they make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. Staff conduct regular observations and assessments of children's learning, but there is some inconsistency across the pre-school with regard to frequency, accuracy and how informative these are. Where staff are supporting individual children in achieving their next steps in learning, the specific areas for development are not always clearly identified or carried through to the weekly planning of activities. This impedes the early identification of children who may need additional support.

Assessments carried out for other children reflect their stages and abilities appropriately. Staff provide a suitable range of activities that are of general interest to the age range of children attending. This enables all children to participate in some fun, relatively challenging and mostly purposeful activities. This generally motivates children to become active and inquisitive learners. For example, pre-school children explore making dens outdoors and show particular interest in tying ropes around objects. Staff ask an appropriate range of open-ended questions. For example, as one child is persevering in tying a rope around a post, a member of staff asks 'can I ask what you're making?' The child thinks for a while and replies 'I am trying to fit the rope around here, but it's a little tricky'. This means that staff allow children sufficient time to think and solve problems, which helps children to develop vital skills for the future. Children also show high levels of interest as they wash clothes outdoors and staff support this interest reasonably well, through their positive interactions. Staff enthusiastically engage in the children's investigative play, to encourage their natural curiosity. Staff introduce new ideas and activities to children's daily routine, by encouraging them to listen to and repeat different sounds and letters. Children enjoy songs, rhymes and stories as part of their routine each day. They have free access to most of the wide selection of books, so that they can look at, point to and talk about the pictures. This adequately supports children's emerging speech, language and communication skills, including those children who speak English as an additional language.

Children are generally working comfortably within the typical range of development expected for their age. They make reasonable progress because staff have a sufficient understanding of how children learn through play. Staff's awareness of the areas of learning is basic in parts, as some areas are less well-planned for. For example, children only have access to two pots of paint at the painting easel and the opportunity for children to explore sand is limited to outdoor play only. Sometimes, children learn well from chosen experiences due to good staff interaction and support as they play alongside. However, some children occupy themselves and for these children staff do not always make the most of activities to challenge them, in order for them to make the best possible progress. Staff regularly observe, assess and record children's progress and generally the plans for

what children need to learn next are appropriate. Children are keen learners and display the characteristics of effective learning and staff mostly support children's play and learning well. Children's imagination is successfully promoted and children engage in role play using a range of real-life resources. For example, children carefully use porcelain cups in the home corner as they pretend to make tea. Other children dress-up as 'workmen' and wear safety helmets, work boots and a real tool bag filled with a range of pretend tools. Children learn about the wider world and its diversity, as they explore a range of visual aids and resources including globes, travel brochures, flags and animals that are associated with Australia to celebrate 'Australia Day'. Children develop sound skills in their physical, personal, social and emotional development and in their communication and language development. Staff engage well with individual children, talking with them and express themselves as they use their generally good language skills to ask questions and show their natural curiosity. Most staff work well with children in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. They get down to the child's own level and use some well-chosen, appropriate questioning to extend communication and thinking.

Parents share their knowledge about children's development and are informed about their children's progress during daily discussions and planned meetings. When starting the pre-school, parents have the opportunity to complete an 'All about me' document which helps to establish children's starting points. Staff complete assessments for the required progress check at age two and track children's progress, regularly identifying areas of strengths and weakness. This information is always shared with parents and parents are encouraged to contribute by adding their comments about the assessment. Parents are involved in children's learning by contributing to children's development files, daily verbal feedback, writing comments in daily diaries and attending parents evenings. In addition, the pre-school also runs a lending library and operates a scheme where parents can take home a range of the children's favourite stories in the form of a story sack so that they can read with their child at home and talk about the accompanying visual aids. This helps them to learn things about what their child enjoys doing at pre-school, so that they can join in with the learning at home. The needs of children with special educational needs are effectively met as the pre-school works very closely in partnership with other professionals to meet children's specific needs. Clear individual education plans are in place and staff work hard to ensure that individual children make suitable progress towards their targets. This pre-school has inclusion at the heart of its practice and places high importance on this.

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

Children enjoy attending this welcoming and friendly pre-school. They show that they feel safe and secure because they happily separate from their parents. The key person system ensures that each child and family has a main point of contact in the pre-school and helps children to form secure emotional attachments. Children have built up strong attachments and relationships with their key person. This enables them to develop a positive attitude to their learning and a strong sense of belonging. As a result, children are confident and have good levels of self-esteem. Children's routines are discussed with parents when the child starts and at regular intervals to help staff to ensure their changing needs are met. All children are content in their environment. They show a sense of belonging and are

proud to show what they are doing. Children's behaviour is supported well by discussions with staff about not hurting their friends and listening to how children can resolve their disputes. Children are learning self-help skills generally well. For example, pre-school children wash and dry their hands independently and put their coats and shoes on before they go outside. Children are well-behaved because staff have a positive attitude to behaviour management. Consequently, children know the simple rules and what the boundaries are. Children learn to play co-operatively from an early age as staff encourage them to share and take turns.

The learning environment in the pre-school is stimulating and the toys and resources are appropriate for the ages and development of the children and cover most areas of learning. Children eagerly participate in a range of outdoor experiences each day that give them further opportunities to be physically active and take supervised risks. For example, they go on a 'welly walk' in the recreational field next to the pre-school so that they can splash in the mud and puddles. The enclosed outdoor play areas also provide the children with free flow access to a variety of outdoor learning experiences. Children enjoy a wide variety of nutritious snacks during the day and staff encourage the parents to make healthy choices as they prepare their child's lunchbox each day. Children are beginning to understand about caring for their environment as the staff teach them about recycling. The children are encouraged to recognise the recycling sign on bottles and packaging and place them in the appropriate recycling bin. However, not all care practices and teaching are consistently effective and, as a result, some aspects of children's self-help skills are not fully developed. For example, the children are not encouraged to help cut and prepare the fruit at snack times, which limits how children learn as part of everyday routines.

Generally good transitions are in place and children are well-supported as they prepare for change. For example, as children prepare for school, the pre-school invites school staff in to talk with the children, invite them to visit school and see their new environment and share tracking information with the school. There is a well-established relationship between the local school and the pre-school. This positive relationship gives children confidence as they make the move to school.

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

The manager has a secure understanding of her responsibility in meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. She ensures that her staff team are aware of their role and responsibilities with regard to protecting the children in their care. For example, they know who they would consult and report any concerns to, should they have a child protection concern. There is a robust procedure in place relating to staff recruitment, which means that all adults in the setting are suitable to work with children and their ongoing suitability is regularly reviewed. Effective risk assessments are in place for both the inside and outside areas. Consequently, risks are eliminated and the environment is safe for children to move around freely.

Staff supervision and appraisal are in place and systems are established to support staffs' continuing professional development. The manager has a suitable understanding of her

role in meeting the learning and development requirements, including the extent to which she monitors the planning and delivery of the educational programmes. However, systems in place are not yet robust enough to effectively track children's progress and monitor the educational programmes, to ensure all children are making at least good progress. The management team are keen to develop the service they provide and are committed to raising standards. However, strengths and weaknesses are not yet clearly identified through the self-evaluation system. Their plans for improvement are based on what they would like to develop rather than sufficiently focused on identified priorities for improvement. As a result, some areas for development are missed and progress is steady but slow. Parents are provided with some opportunities to contribute to the self-evaluation, although, the majority of input comes from the management committee. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been mostly met. For example, the manager has developed an appropriate selection of resources to help children understand about difference and the diversity of the world around them. The manager has also developed effective systems to gather information about children's starting points and has established links with other settings that children attend.

Partnerships with parents are strong. A daily two-way sharing of information keeps parents suitably informed of children's routines and learning activities. Parents have access to all policies and procedures and are confident that they can ask the management for anything that they may need. Parents highly praise the pre-school and the relationships between staff and children. Parents comment that, 'my child is settled and happy and they love coming to pre-school, it's like a second home'. Partnerships with external agencies are in place to identify and meet children's needs, so that most children who need it receive appropriate interventions and support.

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	EY361016
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	857620
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	34
Name of provider	St Michael's Pre-School Nursery Committee
Date of previous inspection	14/05/2010
Telephone number	07564335641

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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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