

St Mary's Catholic Pre-School

Belgrave Avenue, CONGLETON, CW12 1HT

Inspection date	07/01/2014
Previous inspection date	06/07/2009

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

- Teaching has a positive effect on children's development. Staff provide activities which are developed from children's interests and link several areas of learning, making learning fun. Staff are particularly skilled at engaging boys in activities which develop their language and literacy skills.
- The environments both inside and outside are exciting and stimulating. Children develop a healthy attitude to exercise and have free access to outside play during a good proportion of the day. Children's independence and curiosity is well-developed because they can select toys for themselves and staff encourage and support them to extend and develop their imaginative play.
- Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and are confident about how to manage any concerns they may identify. They are well-supported to develop their professional practice through training and include parents in some briefing sessions.

It is not yet good because

- Ofsted have not been informed about changes to the management committee. This has resulted in suitability checks not being completed for these people to ensure children's safety is fully protected.
- There is scope to enhance how closely activities are linked to assessments of children's current abilities and the next steps in their learning, especially for the youngest children, as well as how questioning is used to support children to think through their ideas, to ensure the optimum level of challenge in all activities.

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 playrooms and outside play area.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the pre-school and undertook a joint observation with her during the morning session.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation and a selection of policies and children's records.
- The inspector reviewed the suitability checks for staff working with the children. She discussed the suitability checks for the management committee.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and the pre-school's parental survey.

Inspector

Sarah Rhodes

Full report

Information about the setting

St Mary's Catholic Pre-school was registered in 1993. It is registered on the Early Years Register. It is administered by a committee of parents and has links with the Catholic Primary School in Congleton, in whose grounds it is located. The pre-school operates from a mobile building consisting of two large playrooms, a kitchen area, toilets and an outside play area. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas.

The pre-school employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds appropriate early years qualifications at level 4, three at level 3 and four at level 2. Four staff are working towards their qualification at level 3. The pre-school opens five days a week during term times. Sessions are from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.30pm to 3.30pm, with the lunch club operating from 11.45am to 12.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 43 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 speak 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:

- ensure a secure understanding of circumstances where Ofsted are required to be notified, such as changes to committee members and ensure Ofsted have all the information required in order that suitability checks can be completed for all committee members.

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

- develop staff confidence to adapt planned teaching to: help with further differentiation of tasks in activities to support younger children in the specific areas of learning; use questioning more frequently to develop children's abilities to plan and review what they are doing.

Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school promotes children's learning and development well. Parents praise the continuity in staffing which means they really get to know the children and their interests. Staff support parents to provide information which informs their assessments and planning for each child. Parents feel well-supported by staff in developing their understanding of

how to support their child's learning at home in preparation for the transition to school. For example, parents have been invited to sessions led by the local reception class teacher about phonics teaching and how letters are written in the reception class. Staff get to know the children's interests and abilities well through regular, short observations. These are linked to a development tracking document. This allows staff to track children's progress and make plans to extend their learning. It also provides information for the primary school when children move on into the reception class. The setting ensures a summary of children's development is produced for parents on a regular basis. This means parents are kept well-informed of their child's development and they have a summary not only in time for the progress check at age two, but throughout their child's attendance. Any areas of concern that staff identify as potentially needing to be addressed with the help of external agencies, are shared with parents. This means the setting can fully support parents through any referral and assessment processes which may be necessary. Children with English as an additional language are well-supported to develop their English in readiness for the move on to school. Staff have strategies to ensure parents with English as an additional language are provided with information in a format which helps them understand how their child is progressing and how they can help them further at home.

Staff's teaching is good. Children are well-prepared for the transition to school because staff tailor the activities to meet the needs of the pre-school children. For example, small group sessions are organised in ability groups, which means the oldest and/or more able children can be sufficiently challenged. Staff use routine events and group times to promote children's confidence and communication skills. For example, children are happy to sing songs to their friends or share news about what they have brought in to show everyone. Staff support the children to recall real past events, such as the work they have been doing on writing and posting letters. This triggers others to talk on a similar theme, demonstrating that they are actively listening. Children confidently answer when their name is called, which supports their ability to answer the register when they transfer to school. Some group sessions for younger children are not always as well adapted to take account of when the children are finding the activities too challenging. That said, staff are very successful in also engaging young boys in literacy activities and they show excitement in extending their phonic sound knowledge and writing skills.

Staff cultivate a calm, warm and constructive environment, in which they provide a myriad of activities to stretch children's thinking, both inside and outside. They explain and use different types of language and encourage and support children to 'have a go' by playing alongside them and making learning fun and exciting. For example, they take children's interest in posting Christmas cards and extend this into the new year by providing props to role play. This allows children to write letters and be a post office worker or delivery person. Through this activity children engage in writing, explore mathematical concepts of size and weight, build friendships and the ability to role play and cooperate, as well as expand their understanding of the world around them. Staff also encourage children outside to make marks by starting to paint a picture with water on the paving slabs and children copy and add their own detail. However, staff use questioning which helps children to plan what they are going to do and review what they have done much less frequently. Staff introduce children to other cultures through activities based around cultural festivals and national events to ensure they start to develop an understanding of

the wider world. They have good access to information technology as well as starting to understand more about nature through caring for plants in the garden.

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

The processes to help children settle into the setting are highly effective because the staff group is small and consistent. Children and parents quickly build strong, warm and happy relationships with their key person as well as other staff and children. However, to some extent this is a false sense of security because the management committee has not provided Ofsted with the required information for suitability checks to be carried out on committee members. This means that the setting needs to improve its processes to ensure children's well-being is fully supported.

Children's behaviour is very good. Staff help children think about other people's feelings and they learn to negotiate and cooperate with their play mates. They demonstrate a high level of respect for their friends as they listen attentively to their contributions at circle time or help younger children come in from the garden. Children start to develop healthy lifestyles. They have considerable access to physical exercise during pre-school sessions. They can free flow outside for large proportions of many sessions because of the all-weather surfaces and very large covered area. This means they can play outside and experience a range of weather conditions even when it is raining heavily. All children are able to enjoy and explore the natural environment through planned walks in the local community.

Children's dietary needs are met though the provision of freshly prepared snacks and packed lunches that parents supply. Children are encouraged to experience tasting a wide variety of fruits or enjoy toast at each session. Children's self-care skills are developed through them managing their lunch boxes at lunchtime and choosing when to have their snack at the 'cafe'. Good hygiene practices are introduced to children, through every day routines and children grow in independence as they have easy access to toilet facilities. The confidence they develop is good preparation for their transition to school. Children are shown how to keep themselves safe through discussions, which carefully support them to think through how to manage risk. The layout of the rooms allows children to make choices for themselves from a range of equipment and children show confidence as they make decisions about their own play activities. Where children are identified as having additional needs, the help and advice of other professionals is sought to ensure their well-being is maintained and their needs are met.

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

The children benefit from a setting which has a strong management structure and a committee who is supportive. However, the administrative oversight which has left members of the management committee without suitability checks is a serious breach of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because the group had not ensured that everyone associated with the group was suitable to be part of an organisation which works with children. This means the pre-school needs to improve its

procedures. Fortunately, any harm children are potentially exposed to is mitigated because committee members do not work directly with the children. Appropriate recruitment procedures and induction processes ensure staff's suitability is established when they are employed and reviewed regularly. Staff have all required training, such as first aid training or briefings about basic food hygiene. Children are also safeguarded through the implementation of clear policies and procedures which ensure staff can identify child protection concerns and take appropriate action to protect children. The building is secure, which ensures that children cannot leave unaccompanied and helps staff manage the entry of parents and visitors. Staff have a clear understanding of risks. For example, they ensure hot drinks are consumed away from playing children or ensure staff members are not left alone when it is necessary to change children's nappies, while still maintaining children's privacy. They understand how to manage fire situations and health and safety concerns are promptly addressed while still allowing children to learn to manage some risks for themselves.

Required policies and procedures are in place to help with the safe and smooth management of the setting. The pre-school staff and committee are committed to developing the service for parents and children. A culture of reflective practice which involves all members of staff, parents and children has been developed. Annual appraisals are undertaken with staff and the small size of the team means the manager knows the key strengths of all her staff members. Feedback on staff performance is regularly provided by the manager to continually enhance their teaching ability. The staff are encouraged to undertake further training and qualifications. This has a positive effect on their ability to provide quality learning experiences. The manager monitors room activities and the completion of observation files and assessments of children's progress to ensure no group of children is progressing less favourably than others.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good, because staff have developed a number of ways to help them feel comfortable and welcomed. Parents exchange information with staff at the beginning and end of the day, they are encouraged to share any issues they are concerned about so they can be addressed. Questionnaires are used to provide parents with another way to express their views about the pre-school. The committee draws up a report about the questionnaires' findings which is shared with all parents so they can monitor how issues are addressed. Information in the hallway, including files containing the setting's policies and staff's qualification certificates means parents have easy access to additional information. Parents evenings allow parents to visit the pre-school at a more relaxed pace and find out more about their child's learning environment at a time which suits them. Parents praise the ethos of the pre-school which they feel provides excellent support for them and their children, with lots of activity and space for children to play. Partnerships in the wider context are used to develop the quality of education. The pre-school links with other professionals to help children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as the need arises. They realise the importance of early intervention for children with additional needs ensuring that services are in place to support a child when they transfer to school. The pre-school is well-aware of the importance of developing links with the other providers of the Early Years Foundation Stage where children attend more than one setting. They have strong links with the local school to support the exchange of information to meet children's needs and facilitate their transfer to other provisions.

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	305324
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	948285
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	43
Name of provider	St Mary's Catholic Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	06/07/2009
Telephone number	01260297933

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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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