

St Michael's Nursery

Rear of St Michael's Court, off Crocketts Lane, SMETHWICK, West Midlands, B66 3BX

Inspection date

20/02/2014

Previous inspection date

07/12/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

4

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

- Children form close relationships with their key persons, making secure and appropriate bonds and attachments as they move through the nursery.
- Partnerships with other professionals and agencies are effective in promoting the consistency and accuracy of developing targeted support for individual children.
- Strategies to involve parents in their children's care, learning and development are innovative and engaging, promoting an understanding of how children's home experiences contribute to their attainment and progress.

It is not yet good because

- Teaching lacks inspiration and excitement at times, leading to some mundane activities that do not yet fully extend or challenge children's thinking or extend their ideas.
- Training opportunities tend to be focused on mandatory required training rather than seeking to develop staff skills, interests and broader knowledge of how children learn. Consequently, children's progress is adequate rather than good at present.
- The management of younger children's behaviour does not always take account of their age and level of understanding, as they learn to cope with strong emotions and 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
- 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.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector spoke with the manager, the deputy and staff at appropriate times throughout the day, observing practice in all areas of the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with the owner during the course of the inspection.
- The inspector interacted appropriately with children during the inspection and spoke with them throughout the day.
- The inspector looked at documentation including children's records, learning and development information, staff records, risk assessments and accident records and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector conducted a safety check of the premises during the inspection.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day and from written comments obtained by the nursery.

Inspector

Patricia Webb

Full report

Information about the setting

St Michael's Nursery was registered in 2006 on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is situated in single storey premises in Smethwick in Sandwell and is privately owned and managed. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from four base rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery employs nine members of child care staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and 3. The manager holds a Foundation degree in Early Childhood Studies and the deputy has a BA Honours degree. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 44 children on roll, of whom 41 are in the early years age range. The nursery provides funded early education for 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.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- raise the quality of teaching and learning by extending opportunities for staff to attend a broader range of training that develops an inspired and intuitive approach to how children learn
- develop staff skills further by using more effective techniques that prompt children to think critically, explore their activities and ideas and develop the attributes to make good progress in their learning and development

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

- review the systems for managing younger children's behaviour that are more appropriate to their age and level of understanding as they learn to share, take turns and consider the needs of those other than themselves.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are making steady progress in their learning and development. Staff have increased their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are more aware of how to use observation and assessment to inform planning for children's next steps. The required progress checks at age two are being conducted and demonstrate that staff are using recognised documents, such as 'Early Years Outcomes' and local authority approved programmes, to measure children's attainment and track their progress more accurately. This includes an effective language screening tool and a formal assessment of the learning environment. As a result, children are making suitable progress, with additional support being sought where this may be necessary for individual children. Planning covers all areas of learning over time and there is now a more effective balance of child-initiated and adult-led activity as staff become more familiar with the framework. However, at times, teaching can be rather mundane and ordinary, failing to fully motivate and challenge some children. Although staff have completed mandatory Early Years Foundation Stage training, they have not yet had the opportunity to extend this training more broadly to develop a more intuitive and inspired approach to planning and teaching. This results in staff not fully capitalising on some learning opportunities that occur in the everyday routines of the nursery. For example, sand play is presented as a standard activity and there are limited attempts to build fully on mathematical development, volume or capacity, as the children play. There is a lack of excitement in some of the teaching which could further promote children's curiosity and thrill in finding out what they can do and learn, if staff were more intuitive.

Generally, children enjoy their time in the nursery. They have opportunities to move freely round the environment and can engage in active play indoors and outside, developing their large muscles as they gain control over their bodies. The garden has been refurbished to support learning in the outdoor environment more effectively. This is not yet being used to its full potential, due in part to the severe weather, but also as a result of the weaker teaching, where the learning opportunities are not fully recognised. Records do show however, that children have enjoyed digging and experimenting in the mud kitchen and are being encouraged to spot and identify various birds and animals that visit the garden. Children show off their creative skills in junk modelling, as their efforts are valued and displayed for all to see. Older children become aware of the fun to be had when splashing water over all in close proximity and some children remind others about the need for aprons to be worn. This demonstrates that children's personal, social and emotional development is being fostered effectively. Children from families where English is an additional language are now making stronger progress in their acquisition of English. Staff offer conversation and verbal running commentaries as they play and interact with the children, modelling spoken English well. Non-verbal systems are also used to promote effective communication, such as Makaton sign language and the use of picture timetables and routines. The focus on the prime areas of learning and development supports children in developing the key skills they need for their future learning.

There has been effective development of the partnerships with parents. They have attended some workshops to engage in activities as their children do and experience media such as playdough and cornflour gloop as part of the PEAL training, (Parents, Early years and Learning). Additional courses are being delivered in close partnership with the local children's centre developing parenting skills and encouraging parents to become actively involved in their children's learning and development. They are also invited to

share their children's achievements from home, such as the progress when a child sleeps in their own bed or demonstrates independence in self-feeding. The comments are written on small labels which are being displayed on the 'tree'. Such strategies value and support the ethos of children's progress being a partnership between home and the nursery.

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

Children relate positively to the friendly and caring staff as they settle with ease and form bonds and attachments to promote their emotional security. Parents know who their children's key person is and speak fondly of the support their children receive from all staff. Transition through the nursery is more consistent as staff share information that is now clear and recorded more effectively. This ensures that individual children's needs are known and met. Generally, children's behaviour is managed well as they learn about boundaries and expectations. Some older children are starting to demonstrate signs of empathising with their peers. For instance, a child comforts and reassures a friend who has just tripped over. However, the strategies used to manage behaviour for younger children does not take always account of their age or level of understanding. When toddlers squabble over a toy pushchair, staff remind them about 'kind hands' without fully explaining or addressing the situation in terms that younger children may understand. This hinders how young children learn to manage some strong emotions which they may not be able to fully control due to their age and maturity.

Children's health is promoted through the improved routines for personal care and hygiene. The children's bathroom has now been refurbished and presents a clean, hygienic environment where they can develop independence in their self-care. The recent work was fully risk-assessed and parents were kept fully informed of the work being carried out. Staff's attention to risk assessment in general is much improved. The outdoor play area has been significantly reviewed, with trees removed that posed risks due to the leaves and moss on the play surfaces. The nursery liaised very positively with the local Community Board, responsible for the premises and locale, to engage the services of other organisations in the cleaning up process. This has helped to strengthen links in the community. Children enjoy the fresh air and the area has been designed to encourage climbing on the stepping stone logs and using the wheeled toys with skill as they pedal and negotiate space well, building muscles.

Freshly cooked meals are prepared on site and care and attention is given to knowing and meeting children's individual dietary needs and preferences to promote their health. Older children are supported in developing independence and an understanding of portion control as they serve themselves skilfully. They help themselves to fresh water from the dispenser as staff remind them about keeping healthy. All staff hold current first aid certificates and minor accidents and injuries to children are managed efficiently. Parents are kept fully informed and sign the written records to acknowledge this.

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

Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding procedures to reassure parents of their children's welfare. Following a recent review of the safeguarding arrangements in the nursery, the owner is now the designated child protection officer and all staff are fully aware of this. Staff refer to the flow charts displayed in each care room regarding the action to be taken in the event of a concern. In addition, all staff are clear about how to proceed should there be any allegations concerning the adults who work at the nursery. Comprehensive policies and procedures are available for parents to explain the nursery's duty of care. Staff recruitment procedures are secure and the required vetting requirements are followed to ensure staff are qualified and suitable to work with children. Children's safety is assured as staff undertake rigorous risk assessments on all areas of the nursery and keep parents and Ofsted informed of any changes or work being carried out.

Following the previous inspection, the management team met with early years advisors from the local authority and have continued to work in partnership to bring about improvement. While it has taken some time to attend to various aspects, the action plan is being followed steadily. The process of monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching has been increased. Staff now engage more actively in the appraisals undertaken and appreciate the one-to-one supervisions with the manager to discuss and reflect on the calibre of the teaching. The manager and the deputy are supportive of staff and have worked hard to raise morale. However, the owner is yet to fully support this by extending training opportunities and reviewing staffing arrangements to facilitate staff in extending their teaching skills. For example, staff have expressed comments in appraisals done by the nursery and in questionnaires issued by the Community Board. They have indicated their willingness and eagerness to undertake training other than just the mandatory courses. However, running with the minimum staffing ratios impedes this as it proves logistically difficult to release staff for the courses. This has consequently led to the lack of inspiration and excitement in some of the teaching. The manager has reflected this honestly and accurately in the evaluation of the impact of the provision on children's progress. Plans are in place for further mentoring from the local authority as the setting will be liaising with stronger settings in the area to look at best practice.

The nursery works effectively with other agencies and professionals who may be involved in a child's care, learning and development to ensure a consistent approach is fostered. Partnerships with other schools and settings children may attend are developing and teachers from some of the schools have visited the nursery. Such arrangements contribute to reassuring children and parents in preparation for the move to full time school. Parents speak fondly about the nursery, some having used it for a number of years. They comment on how their children miss it on their non-attendance days and feel that their children are being well-prepared for school.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are

Met

The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are

Met

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	EY336687
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	952178
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	48
Number of children on roll	44
Name of provider	Albert Nathaniel Watson
Date of previous inspection	07/12/2012
Telephone number	01215583446

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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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