

St Mary's Pre School

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

Inspection date

12/05/2014

Previous inspection date

14/11/2013

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

4

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

- Teaching is good because the staff tailor activities to meet the needs of each child who attends. As a result, children are making good progress and enjoy their time at pre-school.
- Effective partnerships with parents mean that important information about children's learning and development is quickly shared. This ensures that parents and staff work together to complement children's education.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective and children are well protected and kept safe from harm.
- Leadership and management of the pre-school are strong as there is a proactive approach to securing continuous improvement.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to improve the opportunities for older children to practise their emerging writing skills in daily activities.
- Sometimes children fail to understand what is expected of them as staff do not consistently model socially acceptable behaviour. For example, saying 'please' and 'thank you' and not eating with their mouths full.

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 pre-school and talked with the staff.
- The inspector viewed the areas of the premises and outside areas used for childcare.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation,
- evidence of suitability of staff and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents, as recorded verbally in discussions.
- The inspector reviewed the action plan and self-evaluation form for the pre-school.

Inspector

Kate Hogan

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 voluntary management committee. The pre-school serves the local and neighbouring area and is accessible to all children. There is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. There are currently six staff working directly with the children. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and two hold qualifications at level 3 or above, including one with Early Years Professional Status. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 27 children attending who are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children for whom English is an additional language. The setting receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend the opportunities for children to further develop their emerging writing skills. For example, by providing more opportunities for them to label their own artwork
- encourage children to further their understanding of socially acceptable behaviour, by consistently acting as role models to teach children to use 'please' and 'thank you' independently and not to talk with their mouths full.

Inspection judgements

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

Teaching is good. Staff assess children's starting points when they join the pre-school. Staff use this information to accurately plan how to improve children's progress. Activities are tailored to meet the needs of the children and information gained is carried forward to future plans. As a result, children make good progress. Staff spend enough time engaging in purposeful dialogue with the children. Open-ended questions are used consistently to encourage children to think about their answers. For example, they are asked what they have done over the weekend and about how they are feeling. As a result, children's communication and language skills are developing well. Staff follow activity themes consistently throughout the day at pre-school. For example, a theme of 'what makes you unique' gives children the chance to look at themselves in mirrors and draw what they see. In addition, story time involves staff reading books about different faces and children are able to identify how each of them looks different to one another. Therefore, children are developing a sense of themselves as individuals and are learning about diversity.

Children are frequently encouraged to work together and count. For example, they count how many people are present and how many need plates at snack time. This means that they are developing well in their mathematical skills. Staff encourage children to make choices, such as what they would like to play with. Children's ability to express their ideas and use their imaginations is encouraged. For example, they pretend to make dolls better with the doctor play toys. They discuss with staff what is wrong with their doll and pretend to treat them. Staff demonstrate skills, such as bandaging, and children attempt to bandage their dolls themselves. Staff offer plenty of praise and the children are, therefore, growing in confidence. Staff use songs to encourage children to listen and tap out rhythms. They use musical instruments and experiment with making sounds. Staff join in and dance and the children copy and move their bodies to the beat. As a result, children's physical development is promoted.

Children use resources and activities that stimulate and challenge them. There is a weekly plan that details which resources are to be set up each day. This is so that all seven areas of learning and development are appropriately covered. Older children learn some of the important skills needed for the move on to school. For example, they help staff to measure out ingredients and add them to a mixing bowl when following a play dough recipe. They are encouraged to work out if they have added enough to the mixture, or if more is needed. Children have a good selection of books and choose to read at free-play time. They ask a member of staff to read to them and follow the words along with their fingers. Therefore, children are developing their reading skills. However, there is scope for staff to extend children's literacy skills in the area of writing. This is because staff do not always ensure that children to have regular opportunities to learn about writing for different purposes. For example, such as writing labels on their artwork.

Relationships with parents in the pre-school are strong. Learning journals are in place to track children's development and are illustrated with photographs and artwork. Information is shared with parents about their child's learning and they are invited to discuss progress at regular parents' evenings. Staff offer parents ideas about how they can extend learning at home by providing a monthly newsletter with details about upcoming activities. Furthermore, parents bring in achievements of their child at home and share these with staff. Parents are happy and comment about how well their children have progressed and how much they enjoy reading the learning journals. The pre-school has a high number of children who speak English as an additional language and staff proactively seek to engage them and their parents. They support children in their home languages, where possible, by learning key phrases from parents. As a result, all children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

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

Children are developing a sense of belonging at pre-school as they have their own coat pegs and name cards. They separate from their parents with ease and are welcomed into pre-school by name. The atmosphere at pre-school is calm and staff support this by giving instructions by song. Children are forming bonds with one another and kindly help each other. For example, when one child drops a plate of daisies that she had picked from the garden, her friend says 'don't worry' and helps her to pick them up. Partnerships with

parents in regard to children's care needs are strong. Care information is shared on a daily basis between staff and parents to ensure that children's emotional well-being needs are fully met. While children generally behave well at pre-school, staff do not consistently model socially acceptable behaviour. For example, children occasionally talk with their mouths full and are not always encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you'. As a result, sometimes children fail to understand what is expected of them.

There is a good key person system in place at the pre-school. The key person visits the family at home before a child starts. Important information is ascertained from the parent about children's likes and dislikes. The key person stays consistent throughout the child's time at pre-school. As a result, both the parents and the children build up strong relationships with their key person. This is further encouraged at snack time when children sit with their key person and discuss the food they are eating. Consequently, children transition into pre-school easily and are growing in confidence, to support their move on into school. Children's independence is encouraged. They manage their own needs by putting on coats for outside play and taking off jumpers when hot. Children are given the opportunity to use knives at snack time to spread cream cheese on their crackers. They are further encouraged to pour their own drinks. Children's awareness of personal safety and risks is promoted. This is because staff remind children not to run inside and to climb the apparatus carefully. For example, when playing on the indoor climbing frame, children are monitored so that they wait until the slide is clear before they go down it.

Children's good health is generally promoted well because they are encouraged to eat a range of nutritious food, which is balanced and healthy. They are invited to bring in fruit from home every day and can choose when they would like to eat at snack time. In addition to the formal snack time, a rolling snack is offered and children independently go to the table, pour water for themselves, and serve themselves fruit. The rolling snack provision encourages children to manage their own personal needs by deciding when they are hungry and thirsty. Staff encourage children to enjoy fresh air and exercise linked to physical development. For example, there is free flow access to the garden, which is available most of the day for children to use. In the outside area, children are encouraged to weave through cones and kick balls. Suitability of equipment and resources within the pre-school is good. All toys are clean and labelled in easy to access boxes.

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

The safeguarding and welfare requirements are promoted well. Risk assessments are done on a daily basis to ensure the premises are safe to use. Robust policies and procedures are in place, including safeguarding, complaints and recruitment. These are closely adhered to. Staff to child ratios are closely monitored and the number of children present is checked frequently. For example, when children go to the toilet they are logged in and out of the room. There is a designated safeguarding person in place and all of the staff are safeguarding trained. Staff are aware that they can report concerns via telephone numbers as listed in the policy. There is a thorough recruitment procedure in place, which clearly details the steps that the pre-school take when recruiting a new member of staff. New staff have an induction, which covers safeguarding, evacuation, policies,

housekeeping and information about the Early Years Foundation Stage. The manager ensures that all items are completed by using a checklist. Appraisals take place annually and informal supervisions are conducted on a monthly basis.

Staff training and qualifications throughout the pre-school are appropriate. The pre-school has a well organised, regular and effective professional development programme, which is improving the quality of teaching. For example, staff attend various training courses, which are identified at appraisals and through personal choice. As a result, there is sufficient expertise to teach children basic skills in the three prime areas of learning. Weekly staff meetings give staff the chance to discuss new practices they have learnt on courses and agree what is to be implemented into the pre-school. The pre-school has improved considerably since the last inspection. This is clear to see as the two managers have worked closely together to correct the previous actions. They use an action plan to log all of the changes they are making and have a self-evaluation form in active use. The manager monitors the learning and development requirements by holding regular moderation meetings to make sure all staff are following the same processes. This is discussed at staff meetings where any questions are raised and actions agreed upon.

Partnerships with parents are good. Parents talk about how their children are coming home excited about the activities that they do at pre-school. They have also noticed how activities are more challenging and structured for children since the last inspection. Parents are invited to verbally share their views on the pre-school at parents' evenings. Children are also asked about what activities they like or dislike. This feedback is used for future planning. Children say 'I have lots of friends here' and 'I like coming to pre-school'. There are effective links with other providers and other agencies in place. The pre-school works with a special educational needs advisory teacher and support worker along with speech and language therapists, when necessary. There are also links with the local children's centres and schools. Primary school teachers are encouraged to come into the pre-school and meet the children. With agreement from parents, information is shared with schools about the children's development. As a result, children's transitions to school are well supported.

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	963149
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	27
Name of provider	St.Marys Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	14/11/2013
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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