

St Marks Pre-school

St. Marks Church & Community Centre, Calder Rise, BEDFORD, Bedfordshire, MK41 7UY

Inspection date

23/04/2014

Previous inspection date

13/06/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

4

Previous inspection:

1

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 4

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 4

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 4

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Policies and procedures in place for dealing with complaints and inducting new staff are not always followed; this poses a risk to children's well-being.
- Some staff are not aware of what action to take if they have safeguarding concerns which they cannot raise with staff within the setting.
- Visitors on site during the hours the pre-school operates are not logged to help keep children safe.
- The leadership team at the pre-school is not fully aware of their responsibilities under the Early Years Foundation Stage. Roles and responsibilities are not well defined and as such, the pre-school have not reported significant incidents to Ofsted.
- Staff focus upon individual activities meaning that children who engage in free play do not always have good quality interactions with staff and staff are not fully aware of what is happening in the wider environment.
- Staff do not consistently tackle poor behaviour or teach children about the consequences of their actions and the impact it has on others.

It has the following strengths

- The staff team work with parents to include them in children's learning.

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 held a meeting with the manager, head of the church council and administration staff.
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation,
- evidence of suitability of household /staff members, and a range of other documentation, including the safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector undertook a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector had discussions with parents, staff and children.
- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the garden area.

Inspector

Hayley Marshall

Full report

Information about the setting

St Marks Church Pre-school opened in 1974 and is registered on the Early Years Register. It operates from St Marks Community Centre in the Brickhill area of Bedford and is managed by the church council. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs 14 members of childcare staff. Of these, the manager is qualified to degree level, one member of staff is a qualified teacher and 10 members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The nursery opens Monday to Friday term time only and a holiday club is offered depending on demand. Sessions are from 8.30am to 5.30pm, with a breakfast club from 8.30am to 9am and the lunch club spanning 12noon to 12.45pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 100 children attending. The nursery 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 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:

- implement more robust safeguarding policies and procedures for recruitment of staff and ensure rigorous induction procedures are followed at all times
- improve staff knowledge of safeguarding to ensure all staff are certain about what action they must take should they need to raise a concern in relation to whistle-blowing
- ensure that there is a log of who is on the premises during the hours the pre-school operates
- ensure that the leadership team at the pre-school are fully aware of their responsibilities and implement the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, including defining the roles of the staff
- improve understanding of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage; this particularly refers to ensuring that all significant events are reported to Ofsted within 14 days of occurrence
- adhere more stringently to written policies and procedures when dealing with complaints to ensure that a thorough investigation is completed and records are kept
- organise staff deployment to ensure that they have a good overview of all areas and to support children's progress during child-initiated activities more effectively through good quality interactions with all children
- improve the consistency of managing children's behaviour in order to teach children to understand their actions and the impact it has upon others.

Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school generally provides a range of adult-led activities which help children to learn in all seven areas of the required curriculum. Staff engage children in activities and spend time talking with them and supporting their learning. However, their preoccupation with these activities means that they are not fully aware of what children are doing in the wider environment. This means that at times, staff are not aware of where young children are playing. They do not consistently sustain high quality interactions with all children

when they are taking part in child-initiated activities. This means that staff do not always help children who prefer child-initiated play to make progress in their learning. The staff are aware of how to model language and, when talking to children, they ask open ended questions and talk about colours and shapes helping children to start to gain an awareness of some mathematical language. Staff teach children who speak English as additional language to communicate through using sign language. When children find it difficult to express themselves, staff encourage them to draw to help articulate their feelings. Children enjoy drawing and staff provide a range of activities for them to enhance this. Staff help children to develop their understanding of letters and sounds by encouraging them to find things at home which start with letters of the alphabet. Staff read with children encouraging their interest in literacy and enjoyment of books.

Children use their small muscles when they roll dough and shape it with their fingers. They use tools, such as, scissors to cut and enjoy sticking with fine materials which increases the dexterity in their fingers in preparation for early writing. Children use their larger muscles as they play in the garden where they climb, slide and enjoy free movement. Children use their imagination as they role play and cover themselves in a quilt. Older children practise brushing dolls hair and share resources together as they talk about their ideas. Some older children are starting to develop skills they need to be successful in their future learning. Staff discuss what practical skills children require with teachers from local schools and help them to build upon these, such as writing their names.

The staff observe children and record their learning. They discuss children's development with parents and find ways to extend upon children's learning at home, for example children take home the pre-school soft toys for the weekend. Parents complete a diary of the soft toys activities helping to build links between the pre-school and children's homes. Parents share information about children's abilities and staff use these to determine starting points for children. Staff track children and identify when their learning does not meet expectations. When children have special educational needs, staff ensure they have additional support to meet their needs. Overall, not all children receive appropriate support from staff to make suitable progress in their learning.

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

Children form close relationships to their key people and are able to make the move between home and the pre-school with some confidence. Staff gather pictures of children's families to include in their progress file, which helps to build links with home. However, children develop a false sense of security due to the safeguarding concerns identified elsewhere in this report. Staff help children to gain an awareness of change and talk to them about the routine and what will happen next. Older children help to tidy up in preparation for their parents arriving to collect them as they start to become independent. Staff help children adjust to starting school by accompanying them on settling in visits. Most children are settled at the pre-school and display the emotional readiness they need for learning. However, some children display unwanted behaviour. They snatch from each other and kick and walk over other children's activities. Staff do not always see or challenge this suitably. Therefore, children gain little understanding of the impact of their

behaviour and do not learn strategies for dealing with strong emotions. This means that they become frustrated and upset and other children are left unsettled and has a negative impact on their readiness to learn.

Staff talk to parents about children's home routines and are aware of events at home which impact upon children's well-being. Staff help children to understand about some aspects of safety, for example they teach them to use scissors safely. Some incidents, such as when children stand on chairs, are not moderated by staff as they do not observe this happening. Children are learning about risks for themselves and have some independence in pouring their own drinks at snack time. Children move equipment around the room as their play unfolds. The older children make choices about where they play and some choice about what they play with.

Children eat healthy snacks and staff help them to understand about food as they prepare it at the table with children. Children learn about the social aspect of eating as they sit together to eat their lunch. Children know that playing outdoors is good for them as they have fresh air and exercise as part of their usual routine. Older children ask to use the toilet and wash their hands as they start to manage their own hygiene.

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

The inspection was prioritised following concerns being raised about the supervision of children. An incident occurred where a child was left in the outdoor area after staff and children had returned inside. At the time, there were suitably safe staff to children ratios in place and staff carried out some checks. Risk assessments were in place and after the incident staff reviewed some of the procedures. However, the inspection found that the public nature of the building from where the pre-school operates means that there are many visitors on the pre-school site. These visitors do not sign in or out to ensure safety is maintained for children. Furthermore, the pre-school does not consistently follow the policies and procedures it has in place to help protect children. There is an informal culture within the pre-school which means that required records are not always completed and checks are not stringent enough. For example, staff who have worked as volunteers do not always undergo suitable recruitment and induction procedures. The senior management at the pre-school fail to complete appropriate interviews or gain references to further confirm staff suitability. Required Disclosure and Barring Service checks are complete for all staff. Some staff are unaware of their full responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. They are unable to explain the action they would take if they had a concern about a fellow member of staff or what avenues there are for reporting outside of the pre-school. Complaints are not recorded nor thoroughly investigated to be able to draw a reasonable conclusion to concerns. Lines of responsibility and accountability are unclear. The work of the manager is overseen by the Church council. However, they are not aware of their legal responsibility for the group and demonstrate a poor awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements. This leads to the setting failing to fulfil their legal requirement in reporting significant incidents to Ofsted.

The pre-school team are supportive of each other and work closely together. Supervision

among the staff team who work with children is in place and helps to identify training needs and targets for professional development. The manager is able to monitor some aspects of teaching and learning, although this fails to fully identify weaknesses. The manager is developing self-evaluation and has a positive attitude towards wanting to bring about improvements for children. Staff undertake qualifications to develop their skills and maintain required training, such as first aid. The pre-school is introducing new methods for observing and recording children's progress and the manager reflects upon the positive impact of this for staff, children and parents. Staff complete the progress check for children at age two and share information with parents in summaries each term.

The pre-school works with other professionals to support children who need extra help with their learning and development. The pre-school works closely with local schools, helping children prepare for their move into formal education. Information sharing between other settings children attend helps to give children some consistency in their learning. The pre-school builds relationships with childminders and welcomes their views and knowledge about children who attend. Parents are confident to talk with staff and find them to be friendly and approachable. The pre-school finds ways to help parents to feel included and ensure they have time to talk with key people at the beginning and end of sessions.

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	219169
Local authority	Bedford Borough
Inspection number	965659
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	100
Name of provider	St Marks Church Council Committee
Date of previous inspection	13/06/2011
Telephone number	01234 312634

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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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