

St Mary's Pre-School

St Marys School, New Road, Northchurch, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 3QL

Inspection date

17/10/2014

Previous inspection date

07/03/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

1

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 1

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 1

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding because highly qualified practitioners demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage. They use their extensive knowledge of how children learn to deliver detailed planning to provide a rich and imaginative learning opportunity based on children's individual interests.
- Children make exceptional progress given their starting points and capabilities. Focused assessments by experienced staff help to ensure an exceptional educational programme is planned, which supports children's excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- Key-persons are sensitive to children's individual needs and help children to form secure emotional attachments. Partnerships with parents, carers and other support agencies are exceptional and promote all aspects of children's well-being. As a result, children receive a consistent approach to their care and learning.
- Leadership and management is inspirational. Children are kept safe as practitioners have a very good understanding of safeguarding issues. They know how to protect children, to monitor and manage potential risks very efficiently. Robust recruitment procedures, regular appraisals and training ensure all adults working with the children are suitable to do so.
- Highly motivated practitioners work extremely well together. A strong management committee supports the professional development of all practitioners working with the children. Highly effective and continuous self-evaluation enables practitioners to review and constantly improve their already excellent practice.

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 spoke to children and observed them taking part in a range of activities both indoors and in the outside play area.
- The inspector looked at a selection of documents in relation to the children's achievements and how the pre-school plans for individual children's progress.
- The inspector checked the evidence of the suitability and qualifications of all practitioners.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, two members of the management committee and sought the views of practitioners at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector sought the views of parents as they collected their children from the pre-school.

Inspector

Tina Kelly

Full report

Information about the setting

St Mary's Pre-School was registered in 1997 and is on the Early Years Register. The pre-school operates from the nursery classroom of St Mary's Church of England School in Northchurch, Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire. The pre-school is a registered charity and managed by a committee consisting of parents and trustees. The pre-school serves the local area, has strong links with the school and is accessible to all children. The pre-school shares an enclosed, outdoor play area with the school reception class and has use of extensive school grounds. St Mary's Pre-School opens Monday to Friday during school term time. Sessions are from 12.30pm until 3.30pm. The pre-school provides a wraparound lunch club and afternoon session for children attending the morning nursery class. There are currently 12 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early years education for three- and four-year-old children. It supports children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs 10 members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds Qualified Teacher Status, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds a qualification at level 2. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance further the already excellent partnership with parents by increasing the ways information is shared about the activities children have taken part in.

Inspection judgements

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

The pre-school provides an exceptionally broad and diverse programme of activities. They extend children's learning to an outstanding level through extremely well-planned play and learning experiences. Detailed planning, clear observations and rigorous assessments in the children's learning journals show they take part in highly challenging learning opportunities. The pre-school has a well-established settling in process including home visits. This ensures all practitioners especially the key-person are very knowledgeable about children's likes, dislikes, interests and previous experiences. This information is used to identify children's starting points and to plan for the next steps in their learning. There is a very effective cohort tracking system, which informs both long and short term planning, to ensure all children make excellent progress in all areas of learning. Staff know the children extremely well, they take time to talk to parents, to share in the children's achievements and find out about events at home. The pre-school works with the Early Years Foundation Stage and supporting documents to ensure children have the skills they need to move on to other early years settings with an extremely strong sense of self-

esteem and confidence. Practitioners complete the progress check for children between the ages of two-and-three years and share a written summary with parents to enable them to support children's developing skills at home when appropriate. There are excellent opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning, although, they may benefit from being more aware of the excellent activities their children have taken part in on a daily basis, enabling these activities to be extended at home. Each term, detailed assessments are evaluated and shared with parents to ensure they are fully informed about their children's progress and recently acquired skills.

The pre-school provides a very interesting environment, which promotes children's curiosity and interests. The classroom is thoughtfully set out to provide easy access to a wide variety of excellent quality toys and resources linked to the seven areas of learning. Children are actively encouraged to move freely around the classroom. There is an excellent mix of child-led and adult-led activities planned into each day's activities. Practitioners place high importance on the development of children's language and communication skills. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. Parents are welcomed into the pre-school to tell stories in different languages and share cultural events. Practitioners provide a selection of favourite books in community languages. This supports children's home languages and introduces all children to the different sounds and letters in other languages, which promotes their understanding of the wider world. Practitioners prepare and plan each story session in great detail. The stories support the planned themes and topics so children gain an excellent, overall learning experience through different activities during each session. Enthusiastic and exuberant storytelling promotes children's interests and suits different styles of learning. Children are encouraged to join in the familiar story lines. The use of puppets further extends children's language and provides lots of laughter and delight as adults help develop children's imagination as they re-enact familiar stories.

Highly skilled staff teach children to think for themselves, to listen and look at what they are doing. They complete activities, such as selecting, counting and cutting fruit at snack times. Children chose ways to do things, they keep trying and have excellent concentration skills. Children enjoy chatting to practitioners who consistently engage children and keep their attention. They ask appropriate questions and talk about previous events. Children are encouraged to talk freely and to express themselves. As a result, children are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their learning and move to nursery or school.

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

Children are clearly very happy and content at the pre-school. They have easy access to a wide and interesting range of play and learning resources set around the classroom. Children who are new to the pre-school settle quickly because practitioners take account of the information about their previous experiences, gained at the home visit. They use this information to ensure children's emotional and personal care needs are met to an exceptionally high level. There is a very strong working relationship with local schools and the onsite reception and nursery class. Children have many opportunities each day to visit the other parts of the school site. For example, they mix with the children in reception

class when playing outside, they use the main hall in poor weather and the school fields for nature walks and sporting events. Children benefit from excellent communication links as they come into the pre-school and they are very well prepared to move on to other early years settings.

Children clearly show they understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy in this stimulating and well-managed environment. The outside play area is extremely well resourced. It provides an interesting and stimulating area for children to learn through imaginative and challenging activities. Children clearly understand the simple rules that are in place to keep them safe when they use the low-level climbing frame. The outdoor play sessions teach children about how to move and use different body parts, to reach and to balance. Practitioners introduce new, descriptive words so children develop a very good understanding of how to move safely. For example, they are considerate to others playing nearby and listen to practitioners when they are reminded to think what they are doing and to take turns. Children are highly competent in finding their own coats and waterproof boots, as they get ready to go outside to play. They are developing great personal skills because they understand they need to change their trousers when they are wet and muddy. Children behave extremely well because practitioners act as superb role models and are clear about their expectations for their behaviour. For example, children know not to run indoors and readily help with tasks, such as clearing up the toys.

Practitioners teach children about healthy lifestyles through well-managed daily routines. All practitioners have attended courses about food hygiene so they are good role models, they teach children good manners at lunch and snack time and talk about healthy foods that promotes their understanding to a very good level.

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

The highly qualified practitioners working at the pre-school have extremely high expectations for the quality of care and learning provided for all children. Practitioners protect children because they attend regular safeguarding training and are aware of the importance of monitoring and maintaining children's safety and well-being at all times. The pre-school uses the Local Safeguarding Children Board code of practice as the basis for their safeguarding procedures. A robust recruitment and thorough induction process ensures all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Detailed risk assessments and effective deployment of practitioners help to ensure the safety and well-being of children at all times.

The highly motivated and skilled staff team have a very strong commitment to continuous improvements and training. Regular appraisals, peer reviews and daily support by committee members help to ensure all members of the team are proactive in ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children. Practitioners value the opportunities they have to share their ideas and opinions. They meet with each other and other early years settings through regular team meetings and cluster meetings at the children's centre. The pre-school has accessed Graduate Leader Funding from Herts County Council and is proactive in supporting practitioners in attending training provided by the local authority

and children centre services. This enables them to consistently extend and develop the professional skills of all practitioners, which supports children's learning to a very high level. The pre-school works extremely closely with children centres, early years agencies and professionals when children need additional support. There is a very comprehensive evaluation process. This clearly demonstrates that the management committee and the manager have an excellent insight into the management and quality of learning within the pre-school. Since the last inspection, the management team have reviewed how the lunch club is managed and now include the session within the pre-school routine to ensure a consistent approach to staffing and the experiences for all children. A very effective assessment process ensures priorities are identified and action plans for continued and planned improvements are in place. All children make excellent progress in relation to their starting points because the staff team regularly evaluate activities and learning opportunities. Although there are no children currently attending the pre-school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, practitioners have a very good understanding of the support available from other professionals and support services.

The pre-school has exceptionally good relationships with parents and extended families. Those spoken to at the time of the inspection talked about how much they valued the excellent learning experiences their children take part in. They said they would recommend the pre-school to other families. They are very pleased to be involved in the pre-school and main school social events. Parents are keen to come into the pre-school to share in festivals and fundraising events. This enables the pre-school to purchase specialist pieces of equipment to improve children's learning and play experiences. The pre-school has a very informative web page, detailed information on display around the classroom and a weekly newsletter to ensure all parents are fully informed about the day-to-day running of the pre-school. Parent's views are sought through questionnaires and regular discussions, both at the end of each session and termly parent meetings. The information is used in the overall evaluation process and to ensure the pre-school continues to adapt and improve their already excellent practice and outstanding learning opportunities for all children.

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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	129391
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	870986
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	12
Name of provider	St Mary's Pre-School Northchurch Committee
Date of previous inspection	07/03/2012
Telephone number	01 442 389040

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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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