

# St Mark's Pre-School Playgroup

St Marks Church Hall, North Road, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL1 3BH



## Inspection date

5 March 2015

Previous inspection date

26 March 2014

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Good	2
	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		Good	2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		Good	2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		Good	2
The setting <b>meets legal requirements for early years settings</b>			

## Summary of key findings for parents

### This provision is good

- The ability of senior leaders to accurately identify the quality of practice across the pre-school is a strength. Since the last inspection, leaders have transformed the setting's outdoor space, improved staff supervision arrangements and are successfully embedding systems to support and promote effective teaching.
- Staff collect a wide range of detailed information from parents about what their children like, know and can do. As a result, staff get to know children well and are able to plan effectively to meet their individual needs.
- Children are well supported by adults to develop the skills they need to become independent in managing a range of self-care tasks. For example, children are encouraged to put on their own coats to go outside and to serve themselves at snack time.
- Planning and assessment are used effectively to provide a wide range of good quality activities for children. Consequently, children are motivated and eager to participate in learning opportunities and so make good progress.

### It is not yet outstanding because:

- Managers do not routinely carry out observations of teaching as part of the supervision process. This means training is not always sufficiently focused on the individual needs of staff.
- Staff do not use their current tracking system effectively enough in order to closely monitor the progress of specific groups of children. This means that the impact of any additional support provided is not always clearly evidenced.

## What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen teaching further by ensuring observations of practice are undertaken more regularly and the outcome of these used to inform on-going training for all staff
- develop the use of the current tracker tool to more closely monitor the progress made by different groups of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that the impact of planned interventions is better evidenced and more clearly shows that gaps in learning are closing.

### Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the main playroom as well as the outside play space.
- The inspector spoke to members of staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and held a meeting with the manager, deputy manager and designated person for safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to on the day of the inspection.
- The inspector looked at children's records, planning documentation, evidence of the suitability of staff working in the provision and a range of other documentation, including policies, procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning documents.

### Inspector

Jayne Utting HMI

## Inspection findings

### **How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend. This is good**

Staff use their good knowledge of the interests and needs of individual children to plan a wide range of exciting learning opportunities which both engage and challenge all children. Children are encouraged to initiate some activities themselves, with staff on-hand to support and extend their play as required. For example, a group of older children attempt to build a bridge out of crates. Staff prompt children to think about how to achieve this by asking questions which make them think about suitable solutions. This encourages children to 'have a go' and they are rightly proud of their achievement. Younger children love to take part in fun, song based activities which promote their listening skills well, whilst also developing their co-ordination, control and movement. Key persons routinely undertake detailed observations and assessments, which are also shared with parents. This helps parents to know how to support children's learning at home and ensures children continue to make good progress.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children is good**

Children behave well and are keen to learn because staff have high expectations and offer clear routines and boundaries. Group time is used effectively to encourage children to talk about how they feel and to understand the impact their actions have on others. This, alongside other resources such as books which show caring and safe superheroes, has helped boys in particular to respect one another, share and to be kind. Outdoor activities encourage children to take risks and challenge themselves through a variety of apparatus and resources. For example, after several attempts, one child succeeded in balancing across a small beam without support. Children move on into school with confidence. This is because staff take effective steps to ensure they are well prepared for these changes. Managers and staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe. First aid and child protection training is regularly updated. This, as well as the effective implementation of safe working policies and procedures, protects children.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision is good**

Systems to evaluate what is working well and what needs to improve are effective and take into account the views of staff, parents and children. New arrangements for supervision and checking staff performance has led to more consistent practice, particularly in relation to observation, assessment and planning. However, managers do not routinely carry out formal observations of teaching as part of the supervision process. This means training is not always sufficiently focused on the individual needs of staff. Managers keep a close check on the progress of individual children and provide extra support for those with identified needs, to good effect. However, the use of this tracker to monitor the progress of specific groups of children is less well developed. This means that the impact of any interventions for particular groups of children, such as those with specific needs and/or disabilities, is not as clearly evidenced.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	301174
<b>Local authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	1004969
<b>Type of provision</b>	Sessional provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	26
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	41
<b>Name of provider</b>	St Mark's Pre-School Playgroup Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 March 2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	07768 400316

St Mark's Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1985. It is registered on the Early Years Register and operates from St Mark's Church hall in Darlington. The pre-school is managed by a committee. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two childcare rooms and an enclosed outdoor play area. There are eight members of staff, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications at a level 3 or above. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only, from 8.30am until 3.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 40 children attending in the early years age group. The setting provides funded early education for two, three and four-year-old children. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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