

St Mary's Pre-School

Church Street, Ilchester, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8LW



Inspection date

10 November 2015

Previous inspection date

21 November 2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	Previous inspection:	Good	2
Effectiveness of the leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	3
Personal development, behaviour and welfare		Requires improvement	3
Outcomes for children		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents

This provision requires improvement. It is not yet good because:

- Teaching does not challenge children to learn enough.
- Some members of the management committee have not been checked to make sure they are safe and suitable to be involved with the pre-school.
- The committee does not play a big enough part in the leadership of the setting.
- The pre-school room is very cluttered and untidy. This does not create a helpful environment for children to learn.
- The manager and staff are not supported well enough in their work. There are too few opportunities for them to discuss what is working well and what improvements are needed.

It has the following strengths

- Children demonstrate good relationships with members of staff.
- Systems to monitor the progress children make work well. The manager has an accurate overview of what each child can do.
- Children have a chance to play in the fresh air in the large outdoor area. This helps them to be healthy and active.
- Staff's understanding about how to keep children safe has improved as a result of recent training.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

	Due Date
■ improve the quality of teaching so that all children, including those who are older and more able, receive an interesting and challenging learning experience that enables them to make good progress	29/01/2016
■ ensure checks are carried out on all committee members to make sure they are suitable for the role	30/12/2015
■ improve the quality of the learning environment by providing a tidy and uncluttered pre-school room	10/12/2015
■ develop management processes so that staff receive effective supervision and observation of their practice to support their professional development.	29/01/2016

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

- develop the role of the management committee further so that it is fully involved in the leadership of the pre-school.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children at play and during snack and lunchtimes throughout the day, both indoors and outside.
- The inspector spoke with children, parents and staff.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector reviewed a range of relevant documentation, including policies, committee meeting minutes, children's assessment records and curriculum planning.
- The inspector had a discussion with the manager about the operation of the pre-school and how it is led and managed.

Inspector

Susan Mann HMI

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of the leadership and management requires improvement

The management committee has not ensured new members undergo required checks to make sure they are safe to be involved in the running of the pre-school. These members do not spend time in the setting and so any possible risk to children is limited. However, it is a requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage that these are done. The committee is supportive of the pre-school. It participates in recruitment procedures and fund raising, for example. It has yet to develop its overall leadership role and does not offer enough challenge or supervision of the manager. It is not fully involved in tasks such as self-evaluation and improvement planning. This limits the effectiveness of the process. The manager has a sound knowledge of early years practice. She monitors children's progress through the 'cohort tracker'. Recently, she improved the way the curriculum is planned in order to make better use of information about what children can do. However, staff are not yet skilled enough to make best use of these systems. The quality of teaching is monitored too informally to result in accurate feedback and improved practice. Safeguarding is effective. Staff have recently undergone training and demonstrate a sufficient understanding of child protection procedures to help keep children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

Teaching is not good enough. Staff do not prioritise children's learning needs. This means there are times when children, especially those who are older or more able, are left to their own devices for too long. For example, children play with basic activities such as train sets or ride-on toys for long periods of time without staff making the most of the learning opportunities available. This limits the progress children make. Children in need of extra help with their learning and development are identified and the setting seeks additional support to help them do well. Information about what children can do is generally accurate and up-to-date. Some activities are planned with children's needs in mind. For example, after making their collage 'santa hats' with close adult direction, children enjoy painting freely at the art activity set up alongside. This helps their creative development. Parents feel well-informed about how their child is getting on at pre-school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

Children are clearly fond of the staff who care for them, spontaneously hugging staff and chatting with them over snack time. Children generally behave well although when children become bored they tend to become unsettled and argumentative. Some strategies to help children share, work quite well, such as use of the sand-timer. Although there have been some recent improvements, the environment is messy. Some of the resources are not easily seen because there are so many boxes and toys stacked around the room.

Outcomes for children require improvement

Children make reasonable progress at the pre-school. Most have a level of development that is broadly typical for their age. Many have good self-care skills and help themselves to what they need. However, older children are not as ready for school as they could be because they do not have enough challenging activities to help them be fully prepared.

Setting details

Unique reference number	143117
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	1026595
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Day care type	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	1 - 5
Total number of places	12
Number of children on roll	14
Name of provider	St Mary's Pre-School Committee
Date of previous inspection	21 November 2012
Telephone number	01935 849452

St Mary's Pre-School has been registered since 1992. It is located in a church hall in Ilchester, Somerset. The pre-school is open term-time only. It is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 11.30, with a lunch club from 11.30am to 12.30pm. Afternoon sessions run from 12.30pm to 3pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. When there is the demand, afternoon sessions run every day of the week. The pre-school provides funded places for three- and four-year-olds. The pre-school employs four members of staff, all of whom hold an appropriate childcare qualification.

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