

St Marks Pre-school

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



Inspection date	4 October 2018
Previous inspection date	20 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents

The provision is good

- The pre-school provides extensive support for families. The staff are acutely aware of when families need support and offer a broad range of additional services. All families are warmly welcomed into the pre-school.
- Staff make accurate observations and assessments of children's progress. They identify what children need to learn next to help promote their development well.
- When children do not make expected progress, staff are quick to seek additional support. Any gaps in achievement close quickly and all children, including children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in their learning.
- Staff maximise the benefits of the outdoor space for children as many do not have access to a garden at home. They learn about lifecycles and enjoy watching butterflies develop from caterpillars.
- Children behave well. They have clear instructions and directions that help them to learn about how to play together socially. Children play games to become familiar with each other's names.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The provider swiftly identifies staff's under performance through effective supervision. However, performance management is not sufficiently incisive to rapidly improve the good quality of teaching for children even further.
- Staff do not always use naturally occurring opportunities during the pre-school routine to promote children's ability to be involved in making decisions.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- implement even more decisive performance management of staff to more rapidly tackle under performance and increase the good quality of teaching even further
- encourage children to be more involved in decision making during their play.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager and provider. She looked at relevant documentation, such as evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to a small number of parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Hayley Marshall-Gowen

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Safeguarding is given high priority at the pre-school. Staff supervise children well at all times during the day. There is a stringent recruitment and induction programme for all new staff. This helps to keep children safe in the pre-school. The provider ensures that all staff and trustees who support the work of the staff, have an in-depth understanding about safeguarding. They are aware of the signs and symptoms that might suggest a child is at risk of harm. Staff are aware of how to report any child protection concerns to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The manager and staff team are well qualified. They undertake further study. For example, they complete research projects into healthy lunches for children. Staff are motivated to continue their professional development.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff focus on developing children's literacy skills. There is a successful book-sharing programme. This enables parents to enjoy reading with their children at home and boosts children's interest in books. Older children have a range of opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge. During registration, older children walk around the circle counting children. They add one more and work out how many children are present. Children play with dough and the staff encourage them to think about size, extending their mathematical knowledge and using descriptive words, such as 'massive'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Snack and lunchtimes are sociable occasions. The children sit together and eagerly talk about the things that they are interested in, such as animals. The introduction of a pre-school garden project stimulates children's learning, as they grow food to eat. Children have regular fresh air and exercise. The staff encourage them to be physically active to help strengthen their muscles. Staff also pay attention to children's emotional development and there are quieter areas outside for children to have time for reflection and thinking. Children have strong attachments to the staff who care for them. The key-person relationship is effective in helping children to settle and feel secure.

Outcomes for children are good

Children make good progress in their learning from their initial starting points. Children for whom the setting receive additional funding are thriving, and any gaps in children's learning close quickly. Children develop good communication and language skills and develop into confident talkers. Older children talk with authority about things that interest them, such as sea birds and owls. Younger children learn quickly and copy adults. They use their imagination to pretend to be at work, holding telephones to their ear and talking while they type on their pretend computers. Children sustain their attention and develop skills they need in readiness for starting school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	219169
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10069076
Type of provision	Full day care
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	52
Number of children on roll	62
Name of registered person	St Marks Church Council Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518991
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2014
Telephone number	01234 312634

St Marks Pre-school registered in 1974. The pre-school employs 12 members of childcare staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, including the manager who is qualified at degree level and a further member of staff who holds qualified teacher status. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday and is open all year round. Sessions are from 7.30am until 6pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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