

St Stephens Pre-School

St Stephens Church Centre, Canterbury Road, Colchester CO2 7RY



Inspection date	26 November 2018
Previous inspection date	Not applicable

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection: Previous inspection:	Good Not applicable	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

This provision is good

- The management team sets an excellent example to the staff and demonstrates a genuine commitment to offering the very best outcomes for children. The staff are clearly motivated and enjoy the time they spend with children. There is a positive attitude towards making improvements that considers the views of staff, children and parents.
- Qualified staff know their individual key children well. Through observations, they identify the next steps in each child's learning and areas in which children need most support.
- Children's safety and welfare are given high priority. Staff deploy themselves very effectively. They make regular headcounts and inform each other when they are taking children to the bathroom or moving them between different areas of the building.
- Snack time is used as a very good opportunity for children to sit together and develop independence and social skills. Staff encourage children to help themselves to a good selection of healthy food choices, such as grapes, pear, sweetcorn, cucumber, pasta and salsa. This contributes to promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Staff build close emotional relationships with children and positive partnerships with their parents from the very start. This includes making home visits for those who would like them. Parents are highly complimentary about the service that staff provide and they comment on the 'family feel' of the pre-school.
- On occasions, staff do not identify opportunities to extend children's learning as fully as possible.
- Although staff use a good variety of behaviour management strategies, occasionally they do not fully support children of different ages and abilities to consider the consequences of their behaviour.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- support staff in identifying all opportunities to extend learning during activities, to help children make even better progress
- help staff to make the most of opportunities to encourage children to understand the consequences of their actions.

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 spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with two members of the management team.
- The inspector held a meeting with the pre-school management team. She looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

Inspector

Sharon Alleary

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The management team and staff access regular training and are clear about their role in protecting children. The pre-school has all legal documentation in place, such as public liability insurance. The management team follows robust procedures to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. For example, all staff have the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Staff have a programme of frequent staff meetings, regular supervisions and yearly appraisals. This helps to ensure they feel valued and supported. Furthermore, the management team organises targeted training to help staff improve their overall knowledge and skills. The manager monitors the progress made by individual and groups of children. This helps to identify any gaps in their learning and provide effective support for children to catch up quickly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Individual staff take responsibility for an area of learning, such as phonics or understanding of the world. They provide children with planned focus activities in that area each week. This helps to ensure children have access to an all-round learning experience. Staff have developed a calming sensory room to help those children who might like to relax and explore the low lighting and twinkling lights. Staff meet with other professionals and attend multi-agency meetings with parents and other agencies to ensure children's individual needs are met. This helps to improve outcomes for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff use picture cues alongside verbal instructions to help support the understanding of children who speak English as an additional language and those who find it difficult to understand what is going to happen next.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Children's self-esteem is high and this can be attributed to the nurturing staff who value each child as the unique individual that they are. Children thrive and enjoy their time at this pre-school. Children thoroughly enjoy being physically active outdoors. They climb and slide on the equipment and experiment with hula hoops after watching staff demonstrate their skills. The indoor and outdoor environments are well resourced. The outdoor play space is highly conducive to helping children develop an understanding about the natural world.

Outcomes for children are good

Children, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points, given their individual unique needs and capabilities. Children take part in science experiments, using vinegar and bicarbonate of soda to create a fizzing mixture. Younger and older children play alongside one another, exploring the different textures of foam and shredded paper. Children demonstrate good hand-to-eye coordination when they take aim with water sprayers to water the plants. Children become motivated learners and develop key skills in readiness for their eventual move on to school.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY539936
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10080150
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	69
Number of children on roll	74
Name of registered person	St Stephens Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP539935
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable
Telephone number	07534911918

St Stephens Pre-School re-registered in 2016. The pre-school employs 11 members of childcare staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Pre-school sessions are from 8.45am until 2.45pm, and a breakfast club is offered from 8am to 8.45am. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

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