

St Mary's Pre-School

Riverhead Village Hall, Amherst Hill, SEVENOAKS, Kent TN13 2EL



Inspection date	16 May 2019
Previous inspection date	21 May 2015

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

This provision is good

- Leaders consistently strive for excellence. They regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and the environment. They use the views of others, such as parents and other professionals, to plan improvements that positively impact on children's learning.
- The well-qualified staff create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. They form strong emotional bonds with children, who are encouraged to express their needs and feelings. Children are well behaved and motivated to learn.
- The inviting indoor and outside spaces provide children with stimulating and fresh experiences. Resources can be independently selected and moved to enhance play. For example, children work together to create a long water slide for dolls, using guttering and containers.
- Detailed assessments are made of children's learning and staff use these to plan interesting activities. Very occasionally, staff do not make full use of their knowledge of children's achievements and/or weaknesses to sharply identify and plan for important next steps in their learning.
- Children develop their imaginations and sense of wonder in the world. For example, they enjoy learning about life cycles as they observe the process of caterpillars changing into butterflies.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Staff share ideas and resources with parents, such as games or equipment, to help them continue to support children's rapid progress at home.
- Occasionally, staff do not adapt their good teaching strategies to offer the more able children further challenge, such as problem solving, during activities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- strengthen the use of good assessments of children's achievements to plan precise next steps for their future learning
- enhance the quality of teaching to the highest level to provide the more able children with further challenge.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching and the impact this has on children's learning indoors and outside.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and the provider, and spoke with all staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with parents and children, and sampled parent questionnaires to help take account of their views.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including records of children's progress, evidence of staff suitability, and policies and procedures.

Inspector

Alison Martin

Inspection findings

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

Leaders ensure staff are aware of the procedures for identifying and responding to any concerns about a child's welfare. Children are well supervised in a safe environment. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are very thorough and robust. Safeguarding is effective. The manager monitors children's progress thoroughly and takes swift action to address any gaps in their learning, particularly for those with special educational needs/disabilities. Consequently, they make good progress and often catch up with their peers. Regular meetings and good training opportunities strengthen staff's knowledge. This has had a positive impact, for example, on the teaching of sign language to support children's communication and language skills.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

Staff make good use of detailed information from parents to assess children's starting points. They provide a rich and varied range of activities based on what they know children enjoy and what they can do. For example, children use cardboard tubes and boxes to create a pretend world for the toy dinosaurs. There is a sharp focus on encouraging children to practise physical skills, which are taught in innovative ways. For example, children develop their balance and core muscles when they stand on the wobble board or join in with exercises during a Sports4schools session. Children share conversations with staff, who skilfully introduce new words into their play. Staff plan meaningful ways to introduce mathematics. For instance, children delight in taking part in a traffic survey where they spot vehicles, categorise them and confidently write down how many they have seen.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Staff support children's growing self-confidence with regular, purposeful praise and guidance. They show respect for their work through the attractive displays around the room. Children follow instructions well and are familiar with the daily routine. They are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles, for example by eating fresh and nutritious foods. Mealtimes are used as a valuable social and learning opportunity. For instance, children are fascinated to learn about peppers as they explore the taste, colours and seeds during snack time. Children demonstrate good levels of self-control and respect as they negotiate and cooperate with one another. For instance, when trying to complete a puzzle, they realise they can achieve a shared goal by working together.

Outcomes for children are good

Children enjoy practising skills that support their future learning well. They are curious and highly interested in what is happening around them. They confidently use resources such as clipboards, notebooks and magnetic boards to practise writing skills. For example, children write letters to each other as part of their role play, demonstrating their knowledge of how words carry meaning. They count and recognise shapes as they pretend to build a house. Their curiosity pushes them to explore new possibilities. For instance, the effect of sponge rollers moving water across the floor or blowing through a cardboard tube to discover a new sound. Children are sociable and happy as they form good friendships with their peers.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127608
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10104181
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 - 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	35
Name of registered person	St Mary's Playgroup (Riverhead) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518835
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2015
Telephone number	07502 428413

St Mary's Pre-School originally opened in the 1950s and registered with Ofsted in 2001. It operates from Riverhead Village Hall in Sevenoaks, Kent. The pre-school is open from 9am to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, during term time only. It receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four years. The pre-school employs seven staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

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