

Inspection of St. Mary's Nursery

Western Avenue, Ashford, Kent TN23 1ND

Inspection date: 4 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are extremely happy, settled and secure. They show a great respect for each other and for staff. They demonstrate exemplary behaviour, making sure others are included in play and ensuring their peers have opportunities to try activities. For example, children encourage others to join them at snack time and offer to help spread their crackers and pour their drinks. They have very close attachments to all the staff, who know the children very well. Children's interests and backgrounds are celebrated and provided for. This helps children to feel proud of who they are and confident to share their experiences from outside the setting. Children openly talk about their feelings, confident to share their emotions verbally, with gestures and expressions.

Children independently make choices as to where to play, who to play with and what to play with. For example, children bring dressing up clothes inside to continue their play in the role play area, extending their play using a variety of props. Some children seek sensitive reassurance from staff, who quickly and positively respond to children's eye contact and non-verbal communication. Children are exceptionally eager to explore, experiment and discover new experiences, showing a clear determination to learn. However, staff do not always recognise when children do not actively engage in some areas of learning outside.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff have a very clear understanding of children's backgrounds. They provide a rich and exciting play environment to support children's social interactions and provide additional experiences to strongly enhance their confidence, self-esteem, speech and language development and physical skills. For example, children prepare their own snacks, talking about the food they are cutting up, where it comes from, if they have tried it before and how it grows. They use cutlery to cut up the foods, showing others the skills they have acquired.
- Staff positively enhance children's and parents' experiences within the local community. They introduce new experiences, such as the veterinary centre to encourage care and compassion towards animals. They encourage outdoor play for children who do not have access to outdoor space at home. They introduce facilities to parents who are not aware of services available to them, to enhance their children's learning at home. For example, children and parents enjoy borrowing books from the library.
- Children's vocabulary is extended and promoted particularly well through routine stories and rhymes. Staff use very effective tone and expression when reading stories that helps to thoroughly engage children in their imaginations. Staff use repetition to encourage less vocal children to express themselves through simple sounds. The most able children express themselves through complex sentences,

using a wide range of vocabulary. Staff calmly distract children who find it hard to concentrate during story times. They use this time well to engage less focused children, using props and individual story times to enhance their concentration.

- Children learn to think critically. Staff use very effective discussions to challenge children's thinking and to help them to discover how to problem solve. For example, staff provide a range of simple and complex puzzles, according to children's abilities. They extend the challenges for the most able children by turning puzzles upside down and talk the less able children through the process of matching pieces to complete the picture.
- All staff work closely with other professionals to enhance the learning and development opportunities for children, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children's individual needs are carefully planned for and advice from other professionals is positively shared and sought. Staff implement positive practice to ensure consistent approaches to children's ongoing care and learning, to help them develop to their full potential.
- Managers work closely with other settings to collaborate on ideas and share good practice. Staff are eager to attend training and to develop new ideas and teaching strategies. They confidently evaluate the effectiveness of the indoor provision, making changes to the environment to support individual children's needs. However, they do not always successfully mirror this for the outdoor environment. Children do not always engage in stories and books that are accessible outside, to help promote their imaginations further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a very clear understanding of their responsibilities to protect children from harm. They have an up-to-date knowledge of the procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child in their care. They work effectively with other professionals to ensure children's welfare is paramount. Children learn to keep themselves safe through clear explanations from staff. Staff are dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment for children's play. They carry out continuous safety checks, particularly taking into consideration the neighbouring building works. Careful consideration is also given by staff when taking children out of the setting for local outings.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- extend the existing evaluation of the indoor provision to further include the outdoor environment, ensuring this is of the same high standard and children can access all areas of learning when playing outdoors.

Setting details

Unique reference number	127605
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10063744
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	St Marys Nursery Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522766
Telephone number	01233 641503
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2015

Information about this early years setting

St Marys Nursery registered in 1994. It operates from a purpose built setting in the centre of Ashford, Kent. It is open term time only, from 9am until 3pm, Monday to Friday. The nursery is committee led and employs six staff. Of which, four hold qualifications at level 3 and above. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Claire Parnell

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed children's play and staff's interactions in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- The manager and the inspector completed a joint observation of outdoor play.
- Parents and carers comments were taken into consideration during the inspection.
- The inspector talked to staff and children during the inspection, when it was appropriate to do so.
- The inspector sampled documentation, such as children's records and staff and committee suitability checks.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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