

Inspection of St Mary's Church Nursery

St Mary's Church, Church Street, DUNMOW, Essex CM6 2AD

Inspection date: 9 March 2020

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thoroughly enjoy exploring and learning through play. They are curious and motivated to discover the rich variety of inspiring activities provided. For example, they break off leaves and sniff different pots of herbs. Children learn the names of the herbs and their uses in cooking. They add the herbs to play dough and enjoy identifying the different aromas and textures. Children make beautiful designs out of the dough. They add freely accessible resources, such as feathers and pipe cleaners, to them. Children are very creative and proud of their creations. They show they feel safe and secure as they are fully engaged in their play. Children confidently answer questions that staff ask them to check their understanding.

Children relish the chance to play outside in the garden. They are busy and energetic. For instance, children play with farm animals in soil at the mud kitchen. They industriously fill a large metal pot with water from giant watering cans to wash them. Children happily plant herbs in the garden and water them. They discuss insects and bugs as they do this. Children use the bug-hunt chart on the wall to identify bees and worms that they have found.

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

- The new management team have worked tirelessly. They have implemented a range of new procedures and practices to enhance the running of the pre-school. Staff feel highly supported. They attend regular supervision meetings that help build their teaching skills and expertise. Managers commit to staff's professional development. They provide them with a wealth of training opportunities. Staff are a close-knit team and have a wonderful sense of well-being. They share a passion to provide children with a rewarding and positive experience at the setting.
- Children join in with games and activities with great enthusiasm. For example, they eagerly play a complex game where they run to choose an animal located in the hall. The animal they choose decides what exercise they have to perform. Children listen carefully to instructions and get very excited as they play. They are learning to make decisions independently and are growing in confidence. Children have the freedom to explore the inspirational activities that staff carefully plan for them. However, occasionally, staff do not quickly adapt activities to follow children's individual interests and extend their learning further.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Parents value the high quality of communication they receive from staff about their children's progress. They receive detailed termly reports and attend meetings to discuss these. Parents support children's learning at home with appropriate 'homework' activities. This

continuity in education helps children to make even further progress. Parents are delighted with how quickly their children settle and make friends. They are thrilled with the close bonds their children have with staff.

- Children are learning to be independent. For example, they help themselves to snacks and drinks at snack time. They ask to leave the table when they finish and clear their plates and cups away. The helpers of the day wash up the dirty dishes. They enjoy the responsibility and staff heap praise on them for their fabulous help. Staff consistently reinforce positive behaviour. However, sometimes, children do not fully understand the rules of the pre-school so that they are able to appreciate how their behaviour affects others.
- Staff provide children with a wide range of opportunities to explore their local community. For example, they visit the nearby woodland area and learn about the nature around them. They feed the ducks at the duck pond and visit the church. Children gain a fabulous understanding of festivals that different groups in the community celebrate. They cook and bake traditional foods, read books and complete interesting activities to build on their knowledge.
- Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. Staff work with outside agencies to closely support children and parents. They commit to helping children make successful progress in all areas of development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff fully understand their responsibilities to safeguard children. They are confident and knowledgeable in identifying and addressing concerns relating to safeguarding and wider child protection issues. They attend ongoing training to keep up to date, and refresh their knowledge in staff meetings. Managers conduct safer recruitment procedures and check staff remain suitable in their roles. New staff complete a thorough induction to confirm their suitability to work with children. Security is of a very high standard. For example, security cameras are used to identify visitors at the front entrance of the hall.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- adapt activities to follow children's individual interests more closely to extend learning to the highest levels
- extend children's understanding of the rules of the pre-school so that they fully appreciate how their actions affect others.

Setting details

Unique reference number	203985
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10127319
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	27
Name of registered person	St Mary's Church Nursery Great Dunmow Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519135
Telephone number	0795759 6303
Date of previous inspection	3 November 2014

Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Church Nursery registered in 1997 and operates from a church hall in Great Dunmow, Essex. The pre-school is open from 8.30am to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, during term time only. The pre-school employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, one staff member holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 6, one at level 4 and three at level 3. The pre-school offers funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Angela Doherty

Inspection activities

- The managers and the inspector completed a tour of the pre-school and discussed how the curriculum is organised.
- The inspector observed a range of activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the quality of teaching and the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and looked through written references. She took their views into account.
- A sample of documentation, including staff's suitability records and policies and procedures, was seen by the inspector.
- Two joint observations were carried out by the inspector and a manager.

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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