

Inspection of St Francis Pre-School

The Vicarage, Galahad Avenue, ROCHESTER, Kent ME2 2YS

Inspection date: 19 May 2021

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
------------------------------	-------------------

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children are not consistently engaged in activities that challenge their learning. Some children find it difficult to settle, which has been more evident since their return to the setting, following closures due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Others wander around aimlessly. However, some children settle well and concentrate at an activity for long periods. The provider has not met previous actions, which has led to significant failures in practice. The manager and staff do not receive the vital support they need to make improvements. Staff do not ensure that concerns about a child are referred to the appropriate agencies swiftly, which compromises children's safety and welfare.

Ofsted has still not received the required documentation from the current committee members to enable suitability checks to be completed. The provider does not consistently follow safer recruitment procedures. Staff complete risk assessments. However, due to the poor leadership, these are not effective in removing hazards to children, especially in the garden. This means that children do not always play outdoors on a daily basis as the area is unsafe. Staff do not help children to gain the skills they need to be independent as they do most daily tasks for them. Children do not gain an understanding of how to manage their behaviour as they do not receive consistent messages from staff.

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

- The provider has continually failed to supply all the necessary information to Ofsted relating to new committee members so the relevant checks can be completed. There is no effective leader who is accountable to take charge and make the required improvements. This has led to poor practice and a steep decline in the quality of the provision, including safeguarding practice and safer recruitment.
- Staff undertake risk assessments but are unable to remove hazards in the outdoor area due to lack of support from the provider. The outdoor area is unsafe for children and therefore they do not play in the fresh air on a daily basis. This hinders children's well-being and prevents the development of those who learn best outdoors.
- Staff do not have regular opportunities for individual meetings with the manager, to help offer guidance and support, due to their overwhelming workload. As there is no clear leadership, the manager does not receive any support or mentoring in her role. She and her staff have worked tirelessly to prevent the decline in the quality of the provision. However, there is a clear and negative impact on staff's welfare due to the lack of leadership.
- Children do not receive clear and consistent guidance and support to help them understand how to manage their feelings and behaviour. Staff do not all manage

children's behaviour in the same way, which gives children mixed messages. This has a negative impact on children's behaviour, and incidents occur throughout the session, which upsets children and disturbs others as they play.

- Staff are able to identify gaps in children's learning from discussions with parents and their observations and assessments. They access advice from other professionals and agencies to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use funding to access resources specifically for individual children, following advice from professionals. For example, following advice, staff bought some resources to help encourage the sense of touch. However, staff do not have support from the provider to enable them to develop an effective system to plan for what children need to learn next. Staff lack understanding of the intent for their curriculum, and activities are not planned and lack purpose. As a result, gaps in children's learning do not close swiftly.
- Children take part in some activities that hold their interest. For example, some children spent considerable amounts of time bathing the dolls and dressing them. However, some children do not settle quickly, and they wander around the setting not engaging in activities for large parts of the session. Staff undertake all daily tasks that children could do for themselves, for example putting on shoes, hanging up coats, and opening packed lunch boxes and unwrapping food. This hinders children's ability to gain the skills they need to move on to their next stage in learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The lack of clear leadership places children at risk of harm. Staff understand how to identify that a child may be at risk of harm. However, due to the overwhelming workload and lack of support from leaders, they fail to make child protection referrals swiftly. This does not safeguard children and ensure that families receive immediate support. The provider does not follow strong and effective recruitment procedures consistently. For example, references from previous employers have not been secured. This means that the provider cannot demonstrate that staff are suitable for their roles.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
--	-----------------

supply all the necessary information to Ofsted relating to new committee members so the relevant checks can be completed	04/06/2021
ensure that all staff, including the designated safeguarding lead, understand the importance of making safeguarding referrals in a timely and appropriate way	04/06/2021
ensure that strong and thorough recruitment processes are followed at all times to confirm the suitability of staff	04/06/2021
take action to implement an effective risk assessment to remove hazards, with particular regard to the outdoor area	04/06/2021
ensure children have daily access to outdoor play	04/06/2021
provide the manager and staff with effective supervision and support to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities and manage their workload	04/06/2021
ensure that staff manage children's behaviour effectively to enable children to receive consistent messages and help them understand the impact of their actions.	04/06/2021

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
support staff to provide a planned and purposeful curriculum to ensure that all children receive the support they need to make good progress in their learning and development	18/06/2021

support staff to enable them to ensure that all children are engaged in their learning and that they receive the help to develop independence.

18/06/2021

Setting details

Unique reference number	103842
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10195549
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 5
Total number of places	40
Number of children on roll	26
Name of registered person	St Francis Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518198
Telephone number	01634 301188
Date of previous inspection	3 May 2019

Information about this early years setting

St Francis Pre-School registered in 1996 and is based in Strood, Kent. The pre-school is open each weekday from 8.30am to 3pm, during term time only. There are five staff, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 6.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Helen Penticost

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The deputy manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager, spoke with staff and interacted with children.
- Parents shared their views about the setting with the inspector.
- The inspection was carried out following the risk assessment process.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021