

Inspection of St Michael's Pre-School

St. Michaels Rc Presbytery, Watford WD25 0NE

Inspection date: 10 June 2021

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Inadequate
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

There are breaches of safeguarding and welfare requirements that have an impact on children's safety. Leaders have not responded to signs of concern about children in their care, which has led to unnecessary delays in sharing information with relevant agencies.

Children enjoy their time in the setting. They come in happily, settle well and explore lots of resources and activities that meet their needs. They become deeply involved in some areas of learning, for example when they examine larvae that will become caterpillars. Staff understand children's learning needs and adapt activities and resources quickly when they notice that children are not making the progress they expect. For example, children who do not enjoy using paint are able to create different art in picture frames using interesting items such as shells, beads and other small parts. Children who do not often choose to write are able to make large marks on cardboard boxes to help them begin to form recognisable letters.

Children show high levels of independence in their daily lives. For example, they fetch their own snack, clear plates and manage their own toileting needs. They gather their own equipment for water play and experiment with a tap to help fill bottles to pour water into a tray. They concentrate while they transport water between two areas, exercising their small and larger arm muscles as they turn the tap, tip and pour with increasing control. Overall, children make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and are well prepared to move to school.

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

- The manager has high expectations of staff and supports them to engage with children across all areas of the setting. They complete a large range of training which focuses on identified areas for improvement. For example, training on helping children to understand their behaviour has improved the way staff manage children's behaviour to make children more independent. However, the manager has not identified significant weaknesses in child protection procedures and has not followed local safeguarding partnership processes.
- Staff are good role models to children and help them learn how to adapt their own behaviour with little prompting from adults. Children develop a strong sense of fairness. For example, they tell their friends 'we're all winners' when they run a race. They play kindly with their friends, making a space at the table for someone else to join in. They use books about feelings and pictures of faces with different emotions to explain how they are feeling. Older and younger children learn to manage risks well. For example, staff help children to balance on planks and to learn when to stop and change direction when running

outdoors. Staff take care to keep areas used by children suitable for their use and change areas to help keep them safe. They have recently changed resources in the larger outdoor area to reduce slips and falls.

- Overall, children are developing good language skills. Where children's speaking and listening skills are below the expected level, staff use supportive steps to help them catch up. Children express lots of thoughts and ideas and use spoken and signed language to communicate with adults and each other. Children show strong knowledge of mathematics. They eagerly write numbers and enjoy counting from one to 10 as they point to the matching number.
- Children settle well when they arrive and enjoy playing with staff and each other. They join in games with their friends and are highly imaginative. They become engrossed in playing 'hospitals'. They wrap each other up in bandages and take care of their patient, testing their temperature, blood pressure and reflexes.
- Children can engage deeply in their chosen play, for example as they create pictures from beads. However, at specific times, staff halt their free play to start large-group activities such as dancing and singing. These activities can go on longer than is appropriate for some children's concentration skills. This means that some children lose focus during these times.
- Parents are extremely pleased with the care and education that their children receive at pre-school. They praise the dedication that staff showed during the lockdown period of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Staff brought resources and activity ideas to children's homes, kept in regular contact with children and parents and helped them to complete activities so they did not lose momentum in their learning. Children who spent extra time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic have settled back into pre-school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The designated safeguarding officer has failed to follow appropriate procedures to monitor or share signs of concern about children to relevant agencies. They have not acted promptly to protect children. Other staff who work directly with children understand how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and/or neglect and know the procedure to report concerns to those with designated responsibility. They are knowledgeable about broader child protection issues, such as potential risks of using the internet. However, the procedure to ensure that developing concerns are acted upon has not been followed. There are additional gaps in the recording of potential signs of concern, and persons with designated responsibilities have not identified these gaps.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
ensure that the designated safeguarding officer follows clear procedures to respond to any concerns about children in their home lives, or elsewhere, and that they report these concerns to relevant agencies without delay	14/07/2021
train all staff to consistently follow the procedure to record any concerns about children, to enable these to be monitored by the designated safeguarding officer.	14/07/2021

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

- support children's development by considering the best time to use adult-directed activities, and when to give children more time to focus on their self-chosen play.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY550908
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10174001
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	39
Name of registered person	Davidovitz, Margaret Mary
Registered person unique reference number	RP550907
Telephone number	07592 626021
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St Michael's Pre-School re-registered in 2017. The pre-school employs eight members of childcare staff. Of these, six, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and one holds a foundation degree in early years. The pre-school opens Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm, and on Fridays from 9pm to 1pm, during term time only. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Naomi Brown

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the 2020-21 COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the setting and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the setting.
- Children spoke to the inspector about things they like to do at pre-school.
- Parents told the inspector about their children's experiences at pre-school and their experience of the pre-school/home partnership. The inspector took this into account in her evaluations.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of practice with the session leader of the pre-school and they discussed the evaluation of this activity together.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation used to support the running of the pre-school. This included policies and procedures relating to child protection and records used to ensure the suitability of persons working with children.
- The inspector completed a learning walk with the manager of the pre-school and they discussed the curriculum together.
- Staff spoke to the inspector at appropriate moments during the inspection.

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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