

Inspection of St Michael's Pre-School

St. Michaels Rc Presbytery, Watford WD25 0NE

Inspection date: 8 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children all settle very well and show that they feel happy and secure in the inviting pre-school. They explore a broad range of activities that covers all areas of learning, and they access much of the provision independently. Staff support children closely to help them to make good progress and to build on what they already know and can do. For example, children move from following staff demonstrations to following spoken instructions as they roll, press and shape dough.

Children independently access books and develop a love of reading. They confidently show their favourite books to adults and help retell the story or explore the pages. Children trace their fingers around tactile books and close the book with a snap, announcing 'stop'. Children tip and pour rice with jugs and scoops, using these skills to develop their hand control. They readily use pens and other materials to make marks on boards, paper and to trace shapes in the tray of rice. They speak to staff and their friends about the marks they have made. Children take pride in their environment and clear up their toys when they have finished. They behave kindly towards each other, following the good example set by staff members.

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

- Significant improvements have been made in safeguarding and welfare matters since the last inspection. All staff are clear about the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and neglect and regularly discuss and refer any concerns they may have. The needs of all children are known by the staff team and there is a strong focus on keeping children safe.
- Children's communication skills are particularly well catered for, including for those children who speak English as an additional language. Staff regularly introduce more language to children, such as explaining that a 'jumpy thing' is a trampoline. They help children to recall their experiences and talk in a range of ways about things that have happened, are happening and have yet to happen. Staff prompt children to discuss something that happened 'during half term' or that they plan to do 'next week'. This helps children to become familiar with different tenses.
- Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and benefit from a wide range of training that helps them to do their job well. They cater for any child's individual care needs and regularly speak to parents to ensure that they have relevant information about children. Staff report that they feel well supported by managers.
- Parents are enthusiastic about the care and education their children receive. They particularly enjoy the progress that their children have made in their

personal, social and emotional development and communication and language. Staff work closely with any other professionals involved in children's lives to meet children's needs.

- Managers promote a positive culture of reflective practice. The staff are keen to implement changes swiftly when they see that something is not working. For example, the rooms used by children have been rearranged to improve children's access to books. All children enjoy choosing and exploring a wide range of books with staff and their friends. However, some changes have yet to embed. For example, changes to the transition arrangements for children at lunchtime do not equally support all children of different ages.
- Staff take children's home lives and prior experiences into account when setting out things they need to learn next. The curriculum focuses on what children can already do. Where staff identify any gaps in children's learning, they take prompt action to work with parents and to get children the help that they need. Any additional funding that children receive is spent specifically to meet their needs, which contributes to the good progress that all children make from their starting points.
- Children talk about the pictures they make, using stones, shells, flowers and pine cones. They tell staff about the things they have made, such as 'my daddy' or 'my house'. This helps children to express their own ideas in their creative play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff have made significant improvements in their understanding and awareness of the signs and symptoms of potential abuse and are clear about when and how to report their concerns. Staff are able to have regular discussions about safeguarding through staff meetings and supervision sessions. This helps staff to be consistent in their decision-making and helps leaders to monitor any developing concerns and ensure that these are reported without delay.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- help staff to be clear about the intent of all activities, especially small-group activities, to shape these more to the needs of the individual children present
- consider the organisation of transition times between one activity and the next, to help meet the needs of the diverse age range of children present.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY550908
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10199084
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	36
Name of registered person	Davidovitz, Margaret Mary
Registered person unique reference number	RP550907
Telephone number	07592 626021
Date of previous inspection	10 June 2021

Information about this early years setting

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

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Naomi Brown

Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk. She talked to the inspector about the curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided. She discussed children's progress with staff.
- The inspector carried out joint observations with the manager and deputy manager.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation. This included evidence of staff's suitability and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- Children spoke to the inspector during the inspection. They showed their favourite books and read them with the inspector.

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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