

Inspection of St Mary's Pre-school (Northchurch) Ltd

Northchurch St. Marys C of E First School, New Road, Northchurch, Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire HP4 3QL

Inspection date: 11 July 2022

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

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children enjoy their time at the pre-school. They form friendships with one another and happily involve others in their games. Children develop their imaginations as they play together. For instance, they pretend to make ice creams for their friends and the adults around them. The oldest children take staff's ice-cream orders. They remember these and recite them back to their friend confidently as they pretend to prepare the order.

Children have fun exploring outdoors. They develop their physical skills as they play. For instance, children fill containers with leaves and twigs. They lift the heavy containers up and carefully transfer the contents to a larger container. Children learn to take risks safely. They develop new skills, such as controlling their pace as they run down a hill. They feel safe doing this as they know staff are nearby to assist them if needed.

Children keenly participate in a variety of opportunities. A visiting teacher regularly attends to teach the children sign language. Children join in with familiar songs and use the signs they have learned as they sing. They demonstrate that they feel confident. This includes children who have recently started at the pre-school and those who speak English as an additional language. They stand up and sing in front of their friends and respond positively as staff praise them for this.

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

- Staff know the children well. They gather a range of useful information from parents before children start. They use this information to plan relevant activities for children. Staff identify appropriate next steps for children in their learning. They regularly discuss children's progress with one another. The dedicated team focuses training and development on the needs of the children. For instance, staff completed a county gold standard award during the COVID-19 pandemic. This helped them to reflect on the provision they offer and develop this even further.
- The manager and staff team have strong professional relationships with school staff. The manager works collaboratively with school staff to develop the learning environment outdoors. She holds discussions with them regarding children who attend the pre-school and the school nursery. For instance, they discuss the children's development and well-being. The manager attends transition meetings at the school to provide children and parents with a familiar face. This strong communication supports children to move smoothly on to the next stage in their learning.
- Parents are complimentary about the staff at the pre-school. They feel that their children are safe and happy in their care. Staff provide parents with suggestions

to help support children at home. They hold discussions with parents regarding any issues that arise. The manager invites parents to visit the setting so that they can share stories with children. For example, parents of children who speak English as an additional language visit the setting and read stories in their native languages. The manager reads the story alongside this, building children's vocabulary and understanding of English.

- Staff differentiate activities to support children's various stages of learning and development. Children sit and focus at these activities well. For example, staff provide paper, pens and scissors. Younger children develop their cutting skills. They proudly share their achievements with those around them as they use the scissors correctly. Older children sit and concentrate as they draw pictures and write their names on their work. Children take an interest in what others are doing. Working together at the same table helps children to learn from one another and develop their own skills further.
- Staff encourage children to join in with tasks, such as tidying up the toys when it is time for snack. Some children participate. However, others are not yet following staff's instructions and guidance fully. This can lead to delays during transition times. For example, some children line up to return indoors when staff instruct them to. Others need further reminders and encouragement from staff. As a result, these transitions take longer than they could. This has an impact on the time that children have to participate in their learning during the session.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a strong understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children. They have processes in place that are strictly followed and adhered to with regards to reporting concerns regarding children's welfare. Staff complete regular safeguarding training to ensure their knowledge is up to date. They are aware of safeguarding issues, such as how to identify children who may be at risk of exposure to extreme views or behaviour. Staff are confident in the process to follow should they have concerns regarding the manager or their colleagues.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support children to build on their ability to follow instructions and participate in tasks more fully, especially around transition times.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY561720
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10246757
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	24
Name of registered person	St Mary's Pre-school (Northchurch) Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	RP561719
Telephone number	07535 184017
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Pre-school (Northchurch) Ltd registered in 2018. The pre-school operates from St Mary's C of E Primary School. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. There is a lunch club from 11.45 to 12.30pm. The pre-school operates during term time only. It employs seven members of childcare staff, who all hold a relevant qualification at level 3 or above. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education to two-, three- and four-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Jenny Hardy

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 of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk where the manager spoke about what she intends children to learn and the curriculum provided.
- The manager and the inspector jointly observed a member of staff interacting with children. They discussed the impact of this on children's learning and development.
- The inspector spoke to parents of children who attend the pre-school and took their views into consideration.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents, including staff suitability documents and attendance registers.

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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