

Inspection of Saint Michael's Ark

St. Michaels Church of England Primary School, Constantine Drive,
PETERBOROUGH PE2 8SZ

Inspection date: 20 September 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 Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

All children make good progress and are happy and secure in this welcoming pre-school. Before children start, they receive photographs of staff members. This aids children in becoming familiar with staff, helping them to quickly settle. Further thoughtful procedures help children to feel welcome and give them a sense of belonging. For example, children enjoy looking at photographs of their families, finding comfort in this, and start to notice that all families are different. Children reflect the positive approaches and high expectations of the staff and persevere at tasks. For example, children develop their small-hand muscles and their creativity as they stretch coloured elastic bands around wooden pegs. They concentrate as they use each colour to 'make a rainbow pattern'.

Staff have a sensitive understanding of the possible effects of the COVID-19 national lockdowns. They kept in touch with families during these times, offering practical ideas for activities to try at home. Children are polite and caring. They show concern for one another and confidently and politely ask for help when needed. Children assess risks and work out how to keep themselves safe. For example, they decide that it is safer to lower the level of a wooden plank before walking across it.

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

- The manager is clear about what children need to learn next in order to make good progress and gain the skills to support their future learning. She supports staff well in assessing children and offering them play opportunities that help them take the next step in their learning. The manager's thorough understanding of each child aids her in making good use of additional funding to support children's development. The thorough monitoring of children's progress enables staff to quickly note any weaker areas in children's learning and to take action to address these.
- Staff report that they feel well supported. Their well-being is sensitively considered and they receive effective supervision that aids them in developing their practice further. Staff complete ongoing training. They share any new knowledge with their colleagues and use this to benefit children in developing, for example, creative role-play opportunities.
- Staff gently reinforce children's learning. For example, at the beginning of the day, children listen to a story about colours and emotions. They later play with coloured pom-poms and dough, remembering that blue signifies sad feelings.
- Staff talk clearly to children, repeating new words and ensuring children understand these. Children develop good communication skills. They explain their play, talking about how they mix paint and sand to make 'rainbow ice cream', for example. This sensitive staff support particularly aids children who

speaking English as an additional language. Consequently, the children make good progress in learning English.

- Staff note children's interests and use these well to help extend their learning. For example, children enjoy making cakes with sand. Staff build on this, and children visit a local shop to buy ingredients and later bake a cake.
- Parents speak positively about the pre-school. They praise staff's good communication and feel that children develop high levels of confidence. Staff provide practical information about activities and support parents well in building on these with their children.
- Staff work very well with other professionals, and this is a key strength of this pre-school. They ensure that all appropriate information is shared so that children's welfare and development are consistently promoted and they and their families receive pertinent support. This particularly aids children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and they make good progress.
- Staff are clear about the intention of activities. They generally support children well so that their development is promoted and they enjoy participating. However, on occasion, staff do not support children to think critically and to solve problems they encounter as they play.
- Children show a growing enjoyment of books. For example, they listen intently to the story at the start of the session. However, staff do not consistently support children to access books independently and to use and read these as part of their ongoing play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures that all staff regularly refresh their knowledge and maintain an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding. They know how to recognise possible signs of abuse or neglect and how to report these to the relevant professional. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns or allegations against other staff members. They understand wider issues, such as the dangers associated with exposure to extreme views and practices. Staff appreciate the potential risks linked to use of the internet and take appropriate action to protect children.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to further enhance children's play. For example, through encouraging children to think critically and solve problems as they encounter them
- extend the support to children in engaging in books and stories.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY457411
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10233878
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare 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	31
Name of registered person	Family Action
Registered person unique reference number	RP517161
Telephone number	07789691622
Date of previous inspection	14 October 2016

Information about this early years setting

Saint Michael's Ark registered in 2012. It is run by Family Action, who manage several other childcare settings. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, during term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 3.15pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kelly Eyre

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 joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector observed staff interaction with children during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- Meetings were held between the inspector, the manager and the operations manager. The inspector looked at relevant documentation and saw evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The inspector held discussions with staff, children and parents at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.

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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