

Inspection of Ilchester St Mary's Pre-School

Church Street, Ilchester, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8LW

Inspection date:

6 September 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

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

The provider has failed to ensure that all safeguarding and welfare requirements are met, and these breaches significantly impact on the safety and well-being of children. Despite weaknesses in the quality of the environment and teaching, children settle quickly and have strong bonds with the staff. Children are confident to move around independently and to initiate their play. However, inconsistency in the quality of teaching means staff do not always challenge children to make good progress across all areas of learning. For example, while young children thoroughly enjoy exploring paint, they gain little from some other activities, such as exploring threading toys. This is because a lack of adult interaction and support means that children quickly lose interest and wander off.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents have only recently started entering the premises again. Most are positive about their children's development, especially their confidence and behaviour. Some parents appreciate the additional support staff give them and comment on working together, especially to provide consistent behaviour management. Parents say they get daily feedback on what their children have enjoyed doing and most know what they are working on next, which helps to support learning at home. However, some parents confirm that they would like to see improvements to the environment and the variety of activities on offer.

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

- The committee and manager do not ensure children are able to access a safe and effective learning environment. For example, in the garden, some tough trays are cluttered with toys and full of rainwater, so children are not motivated to explore and challenge their ideas. The provider has failed to identify and remove risks, such as a broken bin with brittle plastic at the children's head height and weeds that restrict the children's access to outside-play resources. This is despite these issues being raised with them by local authority early years advisors.
- Staff make regular observations of the children and, as a result, they get to know them well. The manager monitors children's overall progress and identifies gaps in their development. However, this information is not used well enough to plan the environment and activities that ensure children benefit fully from meaningful learning. For example, the manager intends for staff to use stories and songs to help children catch up in their language skills. However, they do not always implement this successfully to excite and engage children in developing their vocabulary.
- Staff have some understanding of how to sequence children's learning, such as teaching the skills needed to use a slide successfully and confidently. However, at times, staff disrupt children's thinking. For example, while children are

concentrating well, learning about items that float and sink, staff distract them by suggesting they move on to another activity.

- Staff follow appropriate hygiene routines when changing nappies and help children to understand the importance of healthy practices. However, they fail to identify all health risks to children. For example, children occasionally engage in cooking activities and the kitchen is cluttered and not clean.
- Staff do not always act quickly enough on guidance given by outside agencies for children who require additional support. For example, they are not using all provided aids to support behaviour strategies. Staff do not always pay sufficient attention to supporting those children who need additional help with their language and communication skills. They sometimes miss children's non-verbal communication. For example, when asked what an elephant has on their head, young children point to their ears but staff say, 'that's called a trunk'.
- Young children have positive bonds with their key person and go to them for reassurance and comfort. Staff help children to play together successfully. Children listen well to staff and follow instructions. However, weaknesses in the learning environment do not enable children to benefit fully from early education opportunities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The committee and manager fail to take swift action to ensure the premises are safe for children. The manager has a clear understanding of her responsibilities to report concerns should a child be at risk of harm. Although staff have regular training in all aspects of safeguarding children, their knowledge is not secure enough to deal with some concerns in a timely and appropriate way. This puts children at risk. The committee has failed to notify Ofsted of a change to their members, which is a breach of requirements.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
take action to ensure the environment is safe and fit for purpose and does not expose children to risks to their health and safety	15/09/2022
ensure all staff know how to respond in a timely and appropriate way to safeguarding concerns	15/09/2022

use the staff's knowledge of children to plan and implement a curriculum that extends and deepens children's learning	30/10/2022
ensure staff interaction with children are of a consistently high quality so children benefit fully from their learning experiences.	30/10/2022

Setting details

Unique reference number	143117
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10248641
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	1 to 3
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	8
Name of registered person	St Mary's Pre-School Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP911067
Telephone number	01935 849452
Date of previous inspection	21 October 2016

Information about this early years setting

Ilchester St Mary's Pre-School has been registered since 1992. It is located in a church hall in Ilchester, Somerset. The pre-school is open Monday and Tuesday, from 8.30am to 5.15pm, and on Wednesday to Friday, from 9am to 3pm, for 47 weeks a year. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two and three years. There are three members of staff, all of whom hold an appropriate childcare qualification at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Elaine Douglas

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 led the inspector on a learning walk to discuss the curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- The inspector talked to staff, parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector carried out a joint observation of the outdoor environment and discussed the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector observed the quality of education, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and inspector held a meeting to discuss the leadership and management of the setting. The inspector checked safeguarding information and relevant documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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