

Inspection of The Nursery at St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church, Buckland Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0SL

Inspection date: 14 November 2022

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	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are settled, happy and developing confidence in their familiar play environments. They make close bonds with staff and their friends in all the rooms. For example, babies look for a reassuring face and the open arms of staff when they take their tentative first steps.

Children make plentiful, independent choices. They learn to express their opinions and show a strong attitude towards their ongoing learning. They experience a good blend of child-initiated play and adult-led activities to support their progress and play preferences.

Children relate well towards each other. They show respect and care towards their peers, learning to share, cooperate and negotiate in their play. They receive plentiful praise from staff, supporting children's self-esteem and pride in their achievements and attempts at new experiences. Children listen to rules and boundaries, taking into consideration the impact their actions have on other children.

Children learn about effective hygiene skills and procedures throughout the nursery. Staff act as positive role models. For example, they change gloves and aprons when changing children's nappies. Babies and toddlers receive effective support to blow noses, with sensitive explanations and encouragement to entice them to cooperate. Older children wash their hands independently, confidently explaining the need to dry their hands properly afterwards.

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

- Staff are deployed well throughout the nursery and the barn rooms. Children are constantly engaged in their play. Staff interact well with children, keeping them busy and occupied. Children experience well-resourced activities linked to all areas of learning and relevant to their stages of development.
- Babies' physical skills are supported effectively. Staff encourage them to explore movements and the use of equipment themselves, testing their capabilities and enthusiasm to learn new skills. For example, older babies slide down the slide head first. They listen to simple instructions to look out for other children and to take their time. Young babies model their learning from others, testing new movements. Staff support them well by holding their hands and guiding their bodies down the slide.
- Staff know children well. They confidently explain what children know and can do. They provide them with challenging and stimulating experiences to support children's ongoing development. However, staff do not consistently promote children's learning outdoors. The outdoor space is not utilised fully to help

support children who learn best outside. They do not fully promote children's physical well-being through fresh air and exercise, especially for those children who do not have access to outdoor play at home.

- Children's communication and language skills are promoted well. Staff use repetitive sounds and simplified speech with gestures and expressions to support younger children. Older children explore new vocabulary and complex sentences to increase their skills to communicate their learning. For example, pre-school children describe the vegetables in the curry. They confidently use mathematical language to explain the process of filling buckets of sand and how the 'gloop' feels in their hands.
- Managers play an active role in daily events. They are frequently seen in the rooms, engaging with staff and children. Staff access training, including opportunities to develop their formal qualifications. However, managers do not consistently support staff's understanding of how to fully promote the intention of learning for individual children. Staff follow a daily routine and do not always use impromptu opportunities to enhance children's learning further.
- Parents make positive comments about the progress their children are making in both the nursery and the barn. Staff know all the families well, supporting their needs effectively. Parents know their child's key person and confidently share information about their children's learning. Parents receive plentiful information about the setting as well as events and experiences for their children. Parents talk enthusiastically about supporting their children's learning at home. However, parents do not feel that their children's home language is fully reflected and used to support effective understanding for children.
- Children are eager to learn and want to know more. They are inquisitive, confidently exploring and asking questions to satisfy their curiosity. Older children ask people's names, eager to know who they are and why they are there. Younger children show intrigue in new experiences, testing their confidence to try new activities. For example, they show intrigue when exploring the shaving foam, clapping their hands together to make snow.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a robust knowledge of procedures to follow if they have a concern about the welfare of a child in their care. They understand the signs and symptoms of child abuse and the influences of older children and adults on children's safety. Staff attend regular training and access up-to-date information to promote children's well-being. Management implements secure procedures to ensure suitable staff work with the children. Children play in a safe and secure environment. Staff make daily checks of the play space to promote children's freedom to explore the space available to them.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- utilise the outdoor play areas fully to support children's all-round development and preferences for play more effectively
- extend staff's understanding of providing a flexible approach to children's learning to fully support their individual learning needs
- fully consider the range of needs of children in the setting, to enhance the promotion of children's home languages.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY242745
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10228322
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 4
Total number of places	220
Number of children on roll	119
Name of registered person	Select Learning (Maidstone) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP903344
Telephone number	01622 687878
Date of previous inspection	20 February 2017

Information about this early years setting

The Nursery at St Peter's Church registered in 2002. It operates from six playrooms in a renovated church, separated into two provisions, in Maidstone, Kent. The Nursery is open Monday to Friday, from 7am to 7pm, all year round, with the exception of public holidays. The Barn is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm, term time only. The nursery receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four years. There are 29 members of staff who work with children, 18 of whom hold recognised early years qualifications at level 2 or above. The manager has an early years degree and has achieved early years professional status.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors

Claire Parnell
Sarah Taylor-Smith

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 provision.
- The deputy manager, manager and inspectors completed a learning walk together of all areas of the nursery and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspectors spoke to children, to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspectors talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspectors spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspectors carried out several joint observations with the deputy manager and room leaders.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.

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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