

Inspection of St Michaels Preschool

St. Michaels Hall, Routh Lane, Tilehurst, READING RG30 4JY

Inspection date:

29 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children arrive happy and content. They show they have formed warm bonds with the staff who care for them. Children understand their routines on arrival at pre-school. For example, they know where to put their coats, lunch boxes and drink bottles. Children are content to choose their play from the resources set up and accessible to them. They show they feel emotionally safe and secure in staff care. For instance, many ask for cuddles and this is reciprocated warmly. The provider has failed to provide Ofsted with information about new committee members in a timely manner so that they can complete the relevant checks. Despite this, there is no impact on children's safety and well-being.

Children respond well overall to the activities provided for them. However, the provider's curriculum is not always ambitious enough or consistently planned and understood to help children engage and focus on their learning. Nevertheless, staff know the children very well. They are confident to act on concerns about children's development. Staff help to ensure that children with both identified and possible special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help and support they are entitled to. Children behave well at all times and are respectful to their friends and staff. Most are keen to join in with their activities, while others need and receive more encouragement. Children listen to staff and are starting to show concentration and curiosity about what they do. For example, some children are able to recall how they made moulding dough. They demonstrate an understanding of concepts, such as rolling, pushing and squeezing dough.

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

- The provider does not have secure knowledge and understanding of her role and responsibility to provide Ofsted with all the relevant information about new committee members. As a result, Ofsted cannot complete the relevant checks. However, the new committee members do not have unsupervised contact with children or have sole responsibility for making decisions that affect children's well-being. For example, they are not part of the recruitment process. This means that the impact on children's safety is minimal.
- Staff offer a range of activities and resources that span all seven areas of learning. The curriculum focus is concentrated on helping children to be independent in their routines alongside making choices about their chosen play. Staff are proactive in how they help children develop a cultural awareness of differences and similarities. For example, they learn about Eid and Harvest festival. However, staff are not confident enough about identifying what it is they want children to learn, what children can do already and how they can extend this. Consequently, as children take part in activities, they sometimes tend to lose interest or become distracted.

- Staff are keen to improve their skills and practice. This includes training to support themselves for working with children with SEND and for managing and promoting positive behaviour. Staff speak confidently about how they have utilised new strategies that have proved successful in how they meet children's individual needs.
- Children enjoy singing and show confidence to join in with popular rhymes and action songs. The most-able children are keen to demonstrate their preference for certain songs, and staff willingly sing these. Overall, children show interest in story time and are developing a love of stories. They understand that books have a title and some children are keen to join in with popular endings. Staff are proactive when reading 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and encourage children to recall the food types, and count how many of each. This helps children to build comprehension of the storyline.
- Staff demonstrate an understanding of how to help children to be aware of mathematical concepts. For instance, they build large-scale block towers together and learn to use terms, such as 'big' and 'behind'. They are excited to knock over the high towers but are careful not to harm or upset their friends.
- Children benefit from regular opportunities to be outdoors and physically active. Staff help children to learn new skills using balls and hoops as they play. Staff encourage children to be confident in their self-care routines. They help parents and children to learn the benefits of healthy eating.
- Partnerships with parents are effective. Parents state they feel supported by caring staff who know their children well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of how to protect the children they care for. For example, they know the possible indicators of abuse and how to report any concerns about a child's welfare. Staff also know the referral procedure and what action they should take if they have concerns about a member of staff or one of the leadership team. The provider ensures that staff complete regular safeguarding training to keep their knowledge up to date. Staff closely supervise children and provide a secure environment to ensure children remain safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

	Due date
inform Ofsted of any changes to the committee	16/12/2022

ensure that those with oversight and governance improve their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities, to maintain requirements.	03/01/2023
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- improve staff knowledge so they fully understand the intent of the curriculum, ensuring all staff implement this effectively.

Setting details

Unique reference number	509277
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	10228304
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	28
Number of children on roll	16
Name of registered person	St Michael's Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP909610
Telephone number	07594627139
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Michaels Preschool opened in 1965 and registered in 1992. It is located in the church hall of St Michael's Church in Tilehurst, near Reading. The pre-school is open Monday to Thursday, from 9.15am until 2.15pm, during term time. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four years. A total of three staff are employed to work with the children. They all hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school also employs two apprentices.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Aileen Finan

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the nursery received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in the evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together. The manager explained how staff plan their curriculum and assess children's knowledge and learning.
- A joint observation was completed. The manager explained how staff are supported in their roles.
- The inspector spoke with children, a parent and staff during the inspection.
- Relevant documentation was sampled to ascertain compliance with the requirements of the early years foundation stage.

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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