

Inspection of Ilchester St Mary's Pre-School

Church Street, Ilchester, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 8LW

Inspection date: 12 January 2023

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

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is inadequate

Children are not kept as safe as they could be. Staff do not carry out thorough risk assessments on the premises or recognise hazards. This is despite an action related to this matter being raised at their previous inspection. For example, the environment is very cluttered and untidy. Children continually slip and fall over while playing with the sand. Despite children slipping and falling, staff do not take action to make the area safe, such as sweeping the sand up. Young children trip on the handles of a rucksack stored under a table and can access resources, such as sharp scissors, unsupervised. In addition, systems to ensure unauthorised people do not enter the premises are not robust enough and visiting adults do not adhere to the mobile phone policy, which potentially puts children's safety at risk.

Despite this, children are happy and have good relationships with the staff. Overall, they behave well. Children are confident when separating from their parent and are keen to join their friends to play. Older children benefit from a curriculum which is tailored to their individual needs. For example, staff engage children in meaningful conversations, which support them in developing their communication and speech. However, the youngest children do not always receive enough challenge or support from staff to help them make good progress in their learning consistently. Consequently, at these times younger children quickly lose interest, and wander off and are not being supported sufficiently to engage in their learning.

Parents are positive about the provision and their children's development. Parents appreciate the feedback they get about their children's day and the support the staff provide to access additional resources, such as speech and language therapy. Parents feel well informed and report that their children enjoy attending.

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

- Since the last inspection, there has been very little improvement. While work is underway to help ensure that the outside area is safe and secure for the children to play in, risk assessments inside are still ineffective. Staff do not fully consider children's safety and welfare. For example, babies climb onto a chair and stand up. They toddle around the room with pencils in their mouths, which initially goes unnoticed by staff and does not ensure their safety.
- Overall, staff interact well with older children during focused activities, encouraging them to count, use numbers and match numerals. However, staff do not always implement the curriculum successfully to engage all children or allow them to develop their ideas. For example, staff do not always organise the environment well enough to ensure that children have the space they need to try out and develop their ideas. This is because play surfaces are piled high with resources for other activities.

- Staff know the children well. The manager monitors children's progress overall, identifying gaps in their learning and planning some appropriate activities to support their development. Staff introduce words such as 'scoop' to build on children's vocabulary. They show children how to fill containers with sand and tip them out to make a sandcastle to develop their fine motor skills. Staff use words such as 'smooth' as they encourage children to describe what the play dough feels like. They talk about size and begin to use positional language to develop children's mathematical understanding. As a result, children concentrate well at these times. However, the curriculum planned for the youngest children is not as effective or purposeful. Staff do not use information that they know about the children well enough to plan activities to ensure that all children benefit fully from meaningful learning experiences.
- Staff manage children's behaviour consistently, providing them with strategies to manage behaviour for themselves. Staff have introduced some sign language to help those children that find it more difficult communicating verbally to express themselves more easily. This helps them to communicate how they are feeling.
- Staff follow effective nappy changing procedures and children are learning to manage their own personal hygiene. However, staff do not consider all health risks to children, such as removing used tissues discarded in the role-play area before children arrive. The pre-school environment overall is cluttered and is unclean in some areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff do not keep children as safe as they could do. They do not understand how to provide a safe environment for children. They have not risk assessed the premises sufficiently or removed hazards. Staff do not follow robust procedures to prevent unknown persons entering the premises and without their identity being confirmed. Staff do not ensure that the procedures for the safe use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting are followed consistently. This puts children potentially at risk of harm. Staff complete safeguarding training and recognise possible signs and symptoms that may cause concerns about children's welfare. They understand the procedures to follow should they need to report a concern.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

The provision is inadequate and Ofsted intends to take enforcement action.

We will issue a Welfare Requirements Notice requiring the provider to:

	Due date
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ensure that there are secure procedures to prevent unauthorised people entering the premises and an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors	27/01/2023
ensure effective policies and procedures are followed for the safe use of mobile phones	27/01/2023
take action to ensure that the environment is free from risks, so that children can move around freely and safely.	27/01/2023

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

	Due date
develop the curriculum for younger children to ensure it builds on what they already know and can do and takes account of their interests.	17/02/2023

Setting details

Unique reference number	143117
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10257784
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	6 September 2022

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

Michelle Heimsoth

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together. They discussed the curriculum and the intention for children's learning.
- The inspector talked to staff, parents and children during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The manager and inspector completed a joint observation.
- The inspector and manager had discussions about the leadership and management of the setting throughout the inspection.
- The inspector sampled a range of documentation.

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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