

# Inspection of St Mary's Playschool

Church Centre, The Chase, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 7JU

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Inspection date: 25 January 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection GoodGood

## **What is it like to attend this early years setting?**

### **The provision is good**

Children receive a warm welcome from staff and this provides reassurance for them as they say 'goodbye' to their parents. They arrive eager to learn and ready to get involved in all that is on offer. Children thoroughly enjoy their time at playschool with their friends. Older children show their kindness and consideration for younger children when they play together outdoors and at lunchtime when they sit together to eat.

Children learn useful skills that prepare them for the next stage in their learning. They are particularly proud of their independence and ability to do things for themselves. For example, when putting on their coats to go outside, children skilfully put their sleeves in the right way before laying down their coats to use the method taught by staff. This is clearly an effective technique as most children are able to do it.

Children enjoy looking at books and sharing stories with staff. This helps them to build their vocabulary and learn about the world. For example, children look at photographs in books to help them as they make lanterns and fortune cookies as part of their celebrations for Chinese New Year. This helps them to understand what unfamiliar objects look like and how they are used.

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

- Managers work closely with staff to design a curriculum that helps every child to build on what they know and can do. Staff have a good understanding of what children need to learn and a clear plan for how they will teach essential knowledge and skills. This helps to ensure that children gain new knowledge and practise their skills so that they become more able to do things well.
- Staff make sure that every child is effectively included. They take care to consider each child's needs and what support they may need to allow them to participate in activities. Staff work hard to include specific individual learning programmes within the playschool, such as physiotherapy exercises and signing to support speech.
- Staff take time to reflect on their practice and evaluate the experiences that they offer children. This helps them to identify what works well and what they can improve. This significant improvement, since the last inspection, in identifying areas that they can develop has led staff to explore different ways of supporting children's early mark making in preparation for writing.
- Staff implement highly effective strategies for helping children to learn to stay safe. Children listen attentively and follow instructions. They enjoy counting the number of children in the line before going outside and doing the same when they return to make sure that everyone is present. Children's behaviour is

frequently impeccable.

- Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the playschool. They commend staff for the support that they offer the children and their families. Parents trust staff and are happy to talk to them about any concerns they have. They are well informed about their children's progress, and happily share important information about children's interests and abilities. These successful partnerships contribute to children's well-being.
- Staff offer children a wide variety of interesting and engaging experiences, most of which are well thought out. Children find the shoe-matching game exciting. The game helps children to promote their personal and social skills as well as their mathematical learning. Children delight in identifying the different fruit and vegetables in the home corner as they make pretend meals for their friends. However, staff do not always organise the move between some routines and activities well enough. This means that children do not get to finish what they are doing, or they try to join activities before staff have fully prepared them.
- Staff have a very positive attitude to their work. They show a commitment to developing their knowledge and skills through ongoing research and training. The team share the same ethos. They want every child to have the best experience at playschool and to develop the can-do attitude that will help them to succeed. Staff attend training and successfully implement new ideas. This includes strategies for supporting children's language skills to help every child to gain essential communication skills.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have a secure safeguarding knowledge. The team has recently updated the safeguarding policy. All staff have successfully completed training to ensure that they recognise the possible signs that may give cause for concern about a child's safety. Staff are fully aware of how to record and report concerns about a child. Furthermore, staff know what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of adults who are working with children. The designated senior leads are clear about their role and how they can support staff 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:**

- review and improve the organisation of some routines so that the transition between activities runs smoothly and children know what is going to happen next.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	650135
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10275795
<b>Type of provision</b>	Childcare on non-domestic premises
<b>Registers</b>	Early Years Register
<b>Day care type</b>	Full day care
<b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b>	2 to 4
<b>Total number of places</b>	78
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	52
<b>Name of registered person</b>	St Mary's Playschool Committee
<b>Registered person unique reference number</b>	RP904734
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 471683
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 January 201916 January 2019

## Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Playschool opened in 1968 and is located in Chelmsford, Essex. The playschool employs 11 members of childcare staff, of whom 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above, with two who hold qualified teacher status. The playschool opens during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3.30pm, Monday to Thursday, and from 9am until midday on Friday. The playschool provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Alison Reeves

## Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the playschool.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together. The manager talked to the inspector about how the curriculum is planned and sequenced to support children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector completed a joint observation of an activity. They discussed and evaluated the quality of education.
- The inspector held a number of discussions with the manager and staff. She looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff working at the playschool and committee members.
- The inspector spoke to children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- Parents shared their views about the playschool with the inspector. These were considered as part of the overall evaluation.

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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