

Inspection of St Michaels Playgroup

Church Hall, Colebrook Way, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire SP10 3BB

Inspection date: 19 June 2023

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 demonstrate that they are happy and feel safe at the pre-school. Most children confidently separate from their parents and carers on arrival. Those who need extra help to settle, receive swift support from their key person. Staff know the children in their care well. They plan and provide activities that support children's individual needs. Children are excited to play and become absorbed in activities that enhance their learning and development. For example, children develop their early writing skills as they paint on large pieces of paper in the garden. Others enjoy learning about volume and calculation as they have fun mixing water, leaves, petals, and vinegar to create potions.

Children make independent choices about what they would like to do, and choose from the good range of toys available. Children are developing an understanding of safety. For instance, they know to wear sun hats outside, and during play, they show curiosity and compassion as they learn how to apply sun cream to their dolls. Activities such as these help children to learn the importance of applying and wearing sun cream. Children's behaviour is good, and friendships are clearly forming. For example, children call to their peers to join in their play and others say goodbye to each other with a cuddle. Staff are good communicators with the children. Staff support children's speaking, listening and attention skills well, such as through small group games and story times.

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

- The manager and staff work well together to provide an inclusive environment for all children. They have regular meetings to help them to plan activities that meet the learning needs of the children. As a team, staff regularly discuss their key children, which helps with consistency in supporting their next steps in learning. As a result, all children are making good progress from their starting points, including those in receipt of additional funding.
- Children benefit from an environment that is set up by staff daily. Staff ensure that resources and activities reflect the curriculum well indoors. They encourage all children to play and explore outside. Children have fun as they propel themselves on scooters, swing on the rope swing, and explore with water and funnels. However, staff do not consider how to extend the learning and development fully for those who prefer to spend their time outside.
- Children behave well and are learning to manage their feelings successfully. For instance, they show kindness to children who are younger than themselves. Staff support children to play cooperatively together, and they share and take turns well. Staff offer a good amount of praise and encouragement to the children. For example, they thank the children for helping them when changing activities over.

- Staff at the pre-school, including the special educational needs coordinator, successfully support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work in partnership with parents and professionals, ensuring that children receive the best possible support and care. As a result, children, including those with SEND, are making the progress they are capable of.
- Parents speak highly of the staff at the pre-school and the progress that their children make. They comment that the 'staff are lovely', 'know their children well' and 'are approachable, passionate and informative'. Parents receive regular information from staff and benefit from daily discussions and termly meetings with their child's key workers. This helps them to understand the progress that their children are making.
- Staff comment that they are happy and feel part of a team. They explain that the manager and committee are supportive and approachable and that they all work well together. Newer staff benefit from appropriate inductions, which help them to understand the way that the pre-school operates. Staff have regular chats with the manager about their work, which helps them to feel supported. However, supervision meetings have not been fully embedded to help staff to raise their own practice and personal effectiveness to an even higher level. Despite this, staff benefit from regular training and quizzes, implemented by the manager.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff provide a safe and secure environment for the children to play and explore in. Staff are confident in their roles and responsibilities to safeguard children. They know the signs and indicators that may mean a child is at risk of harm. Staff understand how to report a concern about a child's welfare and the procedures to follow if they are worried about the conduct of a colleague. Staff are well deployed to meet the needs of children and to maintain their safety. The manager makes sure that appropriate recruitment processes are followed so that all staff working with the children are safe to do so.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- enhance the outdoor environment and activities to ensure that those who prefer to play outside are fully supported in their learning
- embed the newly implemented staff supervision arrangements, so that children benefit from teaching of the highest quality.

Setting details

Unique reference number	109883
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10285840
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	46
Name of registered person	St Michaels Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518000
Telephone number	07940 569651
Date of previous inspection	20 October 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Michaels Playgroup registered in 1993. It operates from a playroom attached to St Michaels Church in Andover, Hampshire. The playgroup is open five days a week from 9am to 3.30pm, during term time only. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The playgroup employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, eight staff hold an appropriate early years qualification at level 3 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tracy Bartholomew

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 explained the pre-school curriculum during a learning walk with the inspector.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a planned small-group activity.
- Children spoke to the inspector about the activities they took part in.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector 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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