

Inspection of St Mary's Playgroup

St Mary of the Crays, Church Centre, 114 Old Road, Crayford, Kent DA1 4DZ

Inspection date: 22 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 receive a warm welcome on arrival. Practitioners guide them safely upstairs to the nursery room. Parents comment on the safe and stimulating environment and note the progress their children make. Children quickly settle and build strong, trusting relationships with their key persons.

The provider has the same high ambitions for all children. Children have access to a variety of resources that excite and engage them. They enthusiastically measure ingredients to make play dough. Practitioners introduce new words, such as 'measure' and 'elasticated', which means that children's communication skills are continually stretched. Practitioners encourage children to experiment with 'more' or 'less' and to compare outcomes. This promotes children's mathematical thinking.

The provider's curriculum supports children to develop good physical skills. They join in with dancing and follow actions. In the garden, children confidently climb on the climbing frame. They squeal with excitement as they dig for bugs. Practitioners share in their joy. They consistently praise children, which boosts their self-esteem and desire to achieve. Children behave well. They are kind to their peers. They work together to build vehicles for people who help us. Practitioners discuss roles such as firefighters and delivery drivers. They tell children how these are jobs for everyone. This challenges gender stereotypes and prepares children for life in modern Britain.

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

- Practitioners know their children well. They create a curriculum that follows the children's current interests and motivates them to learn. For example, they provide activities such as colour mixing and growing herbs. Practitioners have regular discussions to share information about children's development needs. They track children's learning to monitor their progress.
- Leaders regularly reflect on their practice. They assess children's progress in their development and adapt activities accordingly. For example, they include jumping and painting with large brushes to develop children's gross motor skills. Leaders hold regular supervision sessions with practitioners to check their well-being. They review training to ensure that their knowledge is current and effective in providing meaningful learning. The provider works in partnership with local schools, which forges a link for smooth transitions.
- Parents are happy with the playgroup. They comment on the caring relationships their children develop with their key persons. Regular communication provides an insight into their child's day, and learning journeys are shared to celebrate children's development. Parents feel well supported when children have additional needs. However, parents do not receive ideas on how to continue to

support children's individual learning at home.

- Children confidently express themselves. They demonstrate positive behaviour. Practitioners instil a familiar routine, which helps children to feel safe as they know the expectations. They support children to understand the consequences of their actions. Children develop good relationships with their peers. For example, they work together searching for bugs and share excitement in their peers' discoveries. They are keen to tell practitioners what they have found.
- There is a clear focus on communication. Practitioners consistently talk to children about their play. They check children's understanding through asking questions. For example, when children are looking for minibeasts, practitioners ask, 'How do we know it's a spider?' This develops children's language skills and they become good communicators. Children who speak English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers.
- Leaders act swiftly to identify children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work closely with parents and seek support from professionals. Practitioners implement strategies that support children's development. They engage children in purposeful activities in small groups and one to one. This leads to children with SEND achieving the best possible outcomes.
- Children develop an understanding of good hygiene. For example, they instinctively wash their hands when they come in from the garden. Practitioners work closely with parents to support potty training. Children develop an understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They discuss their lunch choices and what food is good for them. Children learn how to be safe in the sun and the importance of staying hydrated. However, practitioners do not seize every opportunity to develop children's independence skills, such as allowing them to pour their own drinks at snack time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that practitioners' safeguarding training is regularly updated. Practitioners are aware of the signs and symptoms that a child may be at risk of harm. They know the actions to take should they have concerns about the welfare of a child or actions of an adult. The playgroup is safe and secure. Robust risk assessments are carried out daily. Fire plans are in place and fire drills are carried out regularly. Practitioners record accidents and share information with parents. New and existing employees receive inductions. Everyone who works at the playgroup is vetted and the provider holds records of these checks.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- develop existing partnerships with parents to enable them to continue supporting children's individual learning at home
- make the most of opportunities, such as snack times, to enhance children's self-help skills.

Setting details

Unique reference number	115372
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10295210
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	20
Number of children on roll	24
Name of registered person	St Mary's Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP903121
Telephone number	01322555894
Date of previous inspection	15 December 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Playgroup has been operating since 1974. It employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am to 2.30pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Karen Wells

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the playgroup 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 her evaluation of the playgroup.
- The inspector and the manager had a learning walk so that the inspector could find out more about the playgroup and the curriculum.
- The inspector spent time observing interactions between the practitioners and children. She observed the quality of education and considered the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector spoke with parents and children and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at evidence of employees' suitability and viewed documents such as paediatric first-aid certificates and qualifications.

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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