

Inspection of St Mary's Nursery

St. Marys First School, Hencotes, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 2EE

Inspection date: 3 November 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

Managers want to provide children with a safe and home-from-home environment to play and learn in. They know what they want children to learn and achieve. Overall, staff provide a curriculum which helps children to be ready for school. Children are extremely happy in the nursery. Staff plan the environment to enable children to make independent choices about what they play with. They listen carefully to children's views and opinions. This helps children to feel valued and settled in the nursery. Staff give children regular opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air each day.

Children's behaviour is excellent. Staff teach them to take turns, share and listen to instructions. They give children lots of praise, and the children show pride in their achievements. Babies spontaneously clap when they succeed in kicking a ball and older children give staff a 'high five' when they complete their jigsaws. Staff provide activities which interest children. This helps children to be engaged in their learning. For instance, children enjoy exploring coloured jelly soap. They practise their hand-eye coordination as they carefully pour it between containers. Older children show care and consideration for younger children. For example, younger children cuddle up to older children when they read them a story.

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

- Overall, staff place a focus on developing children's speech and language. They expose children to stories and singing each day. Staff extend children's conversations and introduce new vocabulary, such as 'float' and 'sink' when children play in the water.
- Staff encourage children's mathematical development during all activities. Younger children learn to recognise and match colours. Toddlers begin to count to three. Older children confidently name different shapes, such as squares, pentagons and hexagons.
- Staff encourage children to learn about events and celebrations in the local community. For instance, they learn about Remembrance Day when there is a local parade. Children enjoy decorating poppies for the nearby shop's windows.
- Staff offer children healthy and home-cooked meals and snacks, who learn to feed themselves. For instance, babies confidently use their fingers or a spoon to feed themselves, while older children learn how to use a knife and fork correctly.
- Staff provide activities which encourage children to concentrate, try and have a go. For instance, younger children work out how to make a water wheel spin. They delight in their discoveries, giggling when they make the wheel spin faster.
- Staff plan many activities to develop children's physical skills. Babies climb confidently across small wooden structures indoors. Outside, toddlers enjoy creating obstacle courses with crates and balancing carefully on them. Older

children develop their hand-eye coordination in preparation for later writing. For example, they enjoy using tools and wood to make models.

- Parents are positive about staff and the support they provide for their children. They appreciate the service which the nursery provides. Parents say their children are very happy in the nursery.
- Managers make sure that there is a key-person system in place. Key persons know their allocated children well. However, some staff are unclear about the next steps in development of children who they are not a key person for. This means that they are not able to provide continuity for children or share precise information with parents about what children need to learn next.
- The nursery is inclusive and staff work hard to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use additional funding to support children, such as by providing additional sessions or resources. Managers make referrals to external professionals, such as speech and language therapists, to provide children with specialist support. However, managers recognise the need to provide greater support to staff to increase their knowledge of how to support children with gaps in their language development.
- Managers make sure that staff attend all statutory training, such as safeguarding, food hygiene and first aid. Staff feel well supported and enjoy working in the nursery. However, managers have not yet focused training on extending individual staff's practice and the quality of education to a higher level.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff work hard to keep children safe in the nursery. They are deployed well to supervise children. Staff check the premises each day to ensure that they are safe and secure. Managers make sure that staff know how to recognise the different types of abuse. Staff are confident about how to report any concerns they may have about a child's welfare. They know the procedures to follow if an allegation is made. Children learn how to keep themselves safe. For instance, older children know the importance of wearing safety goggles during woodwork sessions.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support all staff to have a greater understanding of what individual children need to learn next and share this information more consistently with parents
- enhance staff's knowledge of how to help children who need extra support to catch up in their language development
- focus professional development on extending staff's practice and the quality of education to a higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	301777
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10311766
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	0 to 9
Total number of places	49
Number of children on roll	98
Name of registered person	St.Mary's Nursery (Hexham) Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP518694
Telephone number	01434 608723
Date of previous inspection	10 April 2018

Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Nursery registered in 2000 and is located in Hexham, Northumberland. The nursery is independently run and employs 16 members of staff. Of these, the manager holds a qualification at level 6 and the early years teacher holds qualified teacher status. The remaining staff hold childcare qualifications at level 3. The nursery is open all year round, from 7.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, except for bank holidays. It provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Melanie Vincent

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with provider and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the provider.
- The manager and the early years teacher discussed with the inspector how staff organise and plan the curriculum, environment and experiences for children, during a learning walk.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact on children's learning.
- The inspector and the early years teacher evaluated children's learning together during an activity.
- The inspector held a meeting with the manager. She looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with staff, parents and children during the inspection. She also took account of the written views of parents.

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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