

St Mary's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 116672
Inspection date 13/10/2010
Inspector Margaret Davie

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St. Mary's Pre-School has been open for about 40 years. It operates from one large room in St Mary's Church Hall in Marlow Bottom, Buckinghamshire. The pre-school operates during term time only. Sessions from 9.00 am until 12.00pm every week day except Wednesday, when the pre-school stays open until 3.00pm..There is stepped and ramped access to the front door of the hall.

The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children under eight years may be cared for at any one time, with all places available to children in the early years age group. There are currently 36 children between the ages of two and four years on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported. The pre-school is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four. Children attend for a variety of sessions and most live in the local vicinity. The pre-school employs 10 staff, of whom nine work directly with children. Of these, six hold and appropriate early years qualification. Support is received from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a friendly and supportive environment. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and development and day-to-day arrangements to ensure their safety are generally effective. Strong links with parents, other early years providers and advisors ensure all children are fully included. Those in charge have an accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses and have taken some positive action to bring about improvements; however the setting is in breach of two regulations.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure fresh drinking water is made available for children at all times (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 29/10/2010
- conduct and keep a record of the risk assessment of the premises showing when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 15/11/2010

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- broaden the opportunities available for children to independently access toys and resources which promote their early writing skills, understanding of simple technology and provide physical challenge
- extend children's access to toys and resources which help them learn about diversity
- develop the assessment system further to effectively plan for children's future learning
- review the organisation of the setting to ensure children are regularly provided with sufficient interesting and challenging resources to promote their learning

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Steps taken to safeguard children are generally effective. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and procedures are in place to make sure all staff are suitable and aware of their responsibility to protect children's welfare. Day-to-day checks of the setting are carried out and any identified hazards minimised. Entry is secure and a record of visitors is maintained. However, a risk assessment of the premises has not been conducted which is a breach of a regulation. Steps have recently been taken to start to address this oversight.

Staffing issues have meant that for the most part, there has not been a permanent manager in place for the last two years. A new manager has recently been appointed who is highly motivated and demonstrates a clear vision and high aspirations. The staff and committee have worked closely together to draw up a development action plan in order to tackle key areas for improvement. For example a survey has been conducted, taking the views of children into account, about how resources can be used more effectively to support learning and development. Although adequate good quality resources are available, children's learning is not currently maximised because of the way resources are organised and presented.

Effective partnerships with other agencies and early years providers contribute to consistency in children's care. For example, by providing agreed support strategies for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff are committed to promoting equality and diversity. They work closely with parents to find out about children's starting points and individual backgrounds. They provide opportunities for children to learn about the wider world and differences through planned activities; however few relevant resources are made available for children to use in their day-to-day play. Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents are kept well informed by newsletters, a web site and freely accessible progress files. As a result of a recent consultation with them, parents have been provided with more information about the Early Years Foundation Stage and suggestions about how they can contribute to their child's assessment records.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are happy and settled in the pre-school. They form good relationships with staff who know them well and are attentive to their individual needs. Children behave well and receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff to develop their social and self-care skills. They settle down quickly when they arrive, accessing the toys and activities which have been put out for them.

Children develop satisfactory communication skills. They enjoy listening to stories, often cuddled up on the lap of staff who read with good expression to keep them interested. They are provided with opportunities for talking and for listening to instructions, for example during a musical movement activity. A writing table is set up where they can use markers and other resources to make pictures and chalks are available to practise writing while outdoors. However, labelling in the setting is limited and few additional resources are provided to encourage them to develop their early writing skills during role play activities.

Children learn to problem solve as they fit together an alphabet jigsaw puzzle and then reinforce their learning as they sing the alphabet with the help of staff. They are able to explore and investigate as they hunt for shapes in the shaving foam. They learn about technology as they programme the 'beebots' and play a matching game on the laptop. However, few technological resources are provided for them to use independently as they play. Children enjoy using the fantasy cube in their imaginative play, turning the key to make it go and the small tools to make repairs. They demonstrate good cooperative skills as they set up chairs behind the cube to allow more children to take part in their game.

Staff support children's learning through discussion and interaction. They observe them regularly, maintaining both photographic and written evidence of their progress. They track their learning over time and all work together to plan activities. However, assessment information is not used as effectively as it could be to identify children's next steps and incorporate their individual needs and interests into plans for their future learning.

Children learn how to keep themselves safe as they practise regular fire drills. Staff supervise them closely and are careful to explain the importance of personal safety, such as why a spill is quickly mopped up to prevent slipping. They learn about healthy lifestyles including good hygiene procedures, such as regularly washing their hands. Children enjoy healthy snacks and enjoy socialising with their friends as they eat. However, drinking water is only offered at snack time and is not freely available for them throughout the session. This is a breach of regulations. Daily outdoor play is available for all children. They enjoy exploring the toys and resources in the compact outdoor space such as the wendy house, sand tray and small seesaws. Limited resources are available to help them develop skills such as balancing and climbing. Development plans include making better use of the outside area to support children's learning.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- undertake a risk assessment of the premises at least once a year (Suitability and safety of premises and equipment) (also applies to the voluntary part of the Childcare Register) 15/11/2010

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- take action as specified for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register (Suitability and safety of the premises and equipment) 15/11/2010