

St Mary's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Christine Clint

Setting address Parish Room, Betchetts Green Road, South Holmwood,
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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

St Mary's Pre-school registered in 1980. It operates from the grounds of St Mary's Church in South Holmwood, near Dorking, Surrey. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 26 children from the age of two years to the end of the early years age range. The pre-school is open term time only. Weekday sessional care is available from 9.15am until 12.15pm and 12.45pm until 3.45pm; except for a Thursday which has a morning session only. Children use the main hall with adjacent toilet and kitchen facilities and there is an enclosed outside play area. The pre-school serves the local area and nearby villages.

The pre-school provides funded educational places for children of two, three and four years old. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English is an additional language. The pre-school employs seven members of staff; five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and has close links with the local early years network.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The pre-school provides excellent opportunities for child-initiated learning, which is constantly supported by highly effective systems of staff deployment. There is exceptional continuity of staff, who have thorough knowledge and understanding about individual children's development. The accomplished and well-organised leadership shows a strong capacity for sustained improvement. The detailed and rigorous self-evaluation fully reflects all areas of the provision. Most evidence is robust to meet all regulations. There are very strong partnerships in place with parents and carers, who are inclusively involved and consistently encouraged to support their children's learning and progress.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- include evidence of medical suitability to support the staff employment process.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school staff have a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding and a total understanding of the procedures for raising any concerns. They are fully aware of the policies and procedures in place, and all staff read these at induction and update their knowledge at regular intervals. All major aspects of checking new staff are completed to promote and ensure children's safety. However, evidence of staff medical suitability is not included in the records. There is collaborative working with other key agencies to safeguard children and sustain their individual progress. Children learn about safety through very effective daily routines and this is clearly evident in their responses and their positive behaviour. The pre-school leadership is exceptionally successful in inspiring all staff to work towards meeting and sustaining ambitious targets. There is a very high level of staff continuity and continual training to drive improvements across all areas of the provision. The staff and parents have all contributed through discussion and detailed questionnaires and this has fully informed the thorough self-evaluation. Children's ongoing opinions are purposefully sought and used to influence the planned activities and availability of resources.

Children's records show excellent levels of progress. Staff have developed clear and focused systems to show children's achievements and individual ability across the areas of learning. These are meticulously based on children's starting points and closely linked with information from parents and carers. Recent practice has changed following training. For example, instead of continually writing observations, staff now track children more individually and gain an insight into their characteristics and preferences. Highly positive outcomes for children are clearly attributed to the excellent organisation and use of resources. Children are flourishing because of the accurate and effective deployment, and knowledge of staff. They are successfully taking steps to close identified gaps in children's achievements. The pre-school supports children and focuses on their individual needs; they acknowledge differences and reflect these positively. For example, using different languages around the room when labelling, including opportunities for children to explore differences in stories and in the fruit they eat. Staff show complete interest and support during their conversations with children. They readily discuss recent events in children's families and this fully enhances children's clear sense of belonging.

The pre-school has cohesively developed very strong relationships with parents and carers. There are extensive systems in place to gain parents views and opinions. Many families have continued to attend over several years and with consecutive children. There is a parent committee which supports the pre-school and is involved in influencing the decision making. Children's views and preferences are substantially used through observations and discussion to develop and enhance the provision. For example, children display their own work and often ask staff to take photographs when they are proud of achievements. Parents and carers are very well informed about all policies and procedures, they are involved in all aspects of their children's learning and well-being. They receive regular

assessments and can work with staff on children's next planned steps for progress. The pre-school has proactively sought wider partnerships within the community and the early years network. The supervisor and staff show high levels of motivation in raising quality and fulfilling aspects of wider assessments to raise quality and enhance staff knowledge through training.

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

Children are very enthusiastic and become immediately involved in a wide variety of activities. They happily separate from their parents and are eager to talk to staff. Many older children begin to interact with each other. They all show a keen interest in the prepared resources. They play with purpose and have a clear sense of what they are trying to achieve, for example, painting, using glue and glitter or moving the train on the track. Younger children are very focused on the sand tray, which is thoughtfully situated at a low level. They show a fascination for using the tools to make patterns; they trace with their fingers and start to form letter shapes. They patiently know the routines and wait for staff to smooth the sand. Children show high levels of belonging, they are eager to seek out staff to say hello when they arrive. Key worker staff have developed close relationships with children, they are fully involved in conversation and activities at all times throughout the sessions. Families are encouraged to provide photographs of important people in children's lives, and these small booklets are used by children whenever they wish, to settle, reassure or increase their understanding of being valued. Children often sit together showing each other their families and talking about the photographs, noticing differences and developing understanding.

Children demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour because the pre-school has simple and well displayed house rules with pictures. For example, "we touch gently", "we share", "we tidy up" and "we talk nicely to each other". These are reinforced regularly at group times and children readily discuss how they might feel if the rules are not followed. Children show high levels of independence because they move freely throughout most of the session. They feel secure because they know the boundaries and understand the daily routines. They have excellent levels of confidence. They know how to keep themselves and others safe during their play, and they listen to staff and respond to reminders. They learn not to run indoors, not to carry too many items at once and to sit sensibly on their chairs. They learn about dangers by taking part in fire drills and by following different routines for outings or special visits.

Younger children show interest and curiosity as they seek out the resources used for counting at group time. They enjoy handling the multi-coloured table tennis balls, taking these out of the bag and putting them back, recognising colours and repeating the counting. Children fully enjoy the outdoor play activities. They can move faster and be more energetic as well as seeking out mark making activities or riding on wheeled toys. They show developing skills of thinking and planning by confidently moving the guttering into different positions to roll the balls down.

They are eager to join in with a competitive race to see which ball goes the fastest. They watch the coloured hanging tapes which are positioned to catch the wind outside and they want to feel this by running through the moving tapes. Children show very high levels of increasing concentration, they lay on the floor with the train track, joining and manoeuvring trucks. They spend a long time creating shakers with paper plates and pasta, learning to fix items together, spread glue and apply glitter. Children demonstrate outstanding progress in adapting to new technology. They are interested and keen to use the new touch-screen computer, asking for specific games and totally understanding and managing the process, often sharing and learning with each other.

Older children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines, they know they must wash their hands before snack time and staff sometimes re-enforce this through reminders. They independently use the toilets and washing facilities. They keenly sit together making their own decisions about when to have snacks if they are busy playing. Children are encouraged to talk about food and they learn where different food comes from. They remember going fishing on a boat and seeing how the fish are caught. They have very healthy options and they are encouraged to talk about their choices of cucumber, carrots, breadsticks and marmite. Children choose their drinks and staff provide systematic opportunities for them to develop skills of pouring drinks into their own cups. Children are praised for remembering politeness and saying please and thank you. Children show through their imaginative role play that they are learning about regular eating routines, they line up boiled eggs and use the play kitchen to cook pretend meals. They show high levels of contentment, sharing and joining with each other, linking their play with family life and close relationships. Children have innovative ideas and strong skills of negotiation and co-operation. They make plans to carry the items they need to the den and they organise how much each one will carry. They take turns and share single resources. They participate fully in the singing and story time, showing great interest in clapping to celebrate each other's birthdays.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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