

Inspection of St. Marys Preschool Playgroup

322 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 4BD

Inspection date:

6 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous
inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children enjoy themselves. They arrive happily and are greeted by friendly staff. However, they do not consistently benefit from good-quality learning experiences. Some of the activities that staff plan, such as opportunities to use dough and chalk boards, are poorly resourced and do not sustain children's interest. Although children enjoy playing alongside each other, they cannot always extend their play as there are too few resources to go around. For example, when they play in the sand, there is a single bucket. The learning environment does not fully promote children's development and provide opportunities for them to experience a wide range of stimulating, exciting activities.

Ineffective leadership from a previous management structure means that staff have not been supported effectively in their role to improve their practice. That said, staff provide some enjoyable activities in response to children's interests. For example, children learn about what happens when ice melts. Staff further children's understanding as they read books about the Arctic and zoo animals. Children like to play in the large playhouse where there are plentiful props. They develop their imagination as they take on pretend roles. Children are physically active. For example, each morning they walk a 'golden mile' in the hall. This supports children's fitness.

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

- Recent staff shortages, and weaknesses in how effectively the previous leadership team managed change, have significantly impacted on staff morale. However, a newly formed committee has begun to work with managers to form a more cohesive leadership team. This new team has started to take appropriate action to ensure that legal requirements are consistently met.
- Ofsted had not been provided with the necessary information required to check the suitability of all committee members. However, any impact on children is now minimised because the committee members concerned have stepped down from their roles.
- All staff do not receive regular supervision to support them in their roles and to develop their practice effectively. As a result, high standards in education are not consistently achieved. This is reflected in the lack of inspiring activities for children. Staff recognise a need to improve the learning environment, but have not yet got the knowledge and support that they need to make the necessary improvements.
- Children develop good independence skills. They confidently serve themselves drinks at snack time and fetch tissues to wipe their own noses. Staff are attentive and children's key persons ensure that their personal care needs are well met.

- Children's mathematical development is supported. They learn about shapes, numbers and counting. For example, staff encourage children to recognise shapes during their play and staff role model counting on their fingers. Children enjoy looking at the buses that pass the securely fenced outdoor area. They are excited to talk about what number is showing on the bus.
- Parents know their child's key person and report that their children are happy to attend the pre-school. Sometimes, staff hold termly meetings with parents, which provides some opportunities to discuss children's development in more detail.
- Children engage thoughtfully and positively in conversations about the books that they share. They listen attentively to stories in small groups and look at books independently. This supports their speaking and listening skills.
- Children develop good bonds with the staff. They benefit from the close support that they receive throughout their day. As a result, children feel safe. Children keenly join in with the familiar routines. For example, they help to tidy away toys on staff's request. Children learn to get along well together. Where there are occasional disagreements, they express their views and seek appropriate support from staff to resolve their difficulties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand and carry out their responsibilities to safeguard children. They know how to recognise and respond to the possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect. The pre-school has suitable policies and procedures in place to keep children safe and to promote their well-being. For example, staff's personal mobile phones are not used around children. Those with the lead responsibility for safeguarding children are suitably trained and demonstrate that they understand their role. Recruitment is effective and procedures are in place to ensure that all those working directly with the children are suitable for their roles.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
ensure that all staff receive regular and effective supervision that helps to develop their knowledge and skills, fosters a culture of mutual support and teamwork, and encourages the discussion of sensitive issues	02/04/2020

provide children with consistently challenging and enjoyable experiences to inspire them to learn.	07/05/2020
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To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- strengthen self-evaluation and involve all staff in identifying strengths and areas for improvement, to establish a clear plan for achieving high-quality education and to ensure that legal requirements are consistently met.

Setting details

Unique reference number	251658
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10113217
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	47
Name of registered person	St Mary's Pre School Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523351
Telephone number	01473807252
Date of previous inspection	25 April 2016

Information about this early years setting

St. Marys Preschool Playgroup registered in 1999. The pre-school employs seven members of childcare staff, all of whom have appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above. This includes the acting manager, who has a level 5 qualification. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 3.30pm on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, and from 9am until midday on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kate Hipperson

Inspection activities

- This inspection was carried out as a result of the risk assessment process, following information received about the provision that raised concerns.
- The inspector observed the quality of interactions between staff and children and evaluated the impact that these had on children's learning and development. The inspector discussed what is provided for children to support their learning on a learning walk with the acting manager.
- The inspector looked at evidence of the suitability of staff members. First-aid training certificates were viewed.
- The inspector held joint discussions with the manager, and had a brief meeting.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection. The inspector evaluated the experiences of children.
- The inspector spoke with parents and considered their views about the setting.

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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