

# St Marks Pre-school

St. Marks Church & Community Centre, Calder Rise, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK41 7UY

<b>Inspection date</b>	20/10/2014
Previous inspection date	23/04/2014

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	2
	Previous inspection:	4
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

## The quality and standards of the early years provision

### This provision is good

- All children's individual needs are identified and met because the effective key-person system ensures that practitioners work in close partnership with parents.
- Children are kept safe as practitioners have a good understanding of how to safeguard them. Robust recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that all practitioners working with children are suitable to do so.
- Managers effectively monitor children's learning and development to ensure that any emerging gaps are quickly addressed, so that they continue to make good progress.
- Teaching is good because practitioners link planning, observations and children's interests effectively. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and development.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Practitioners do not always give children sufficient time to make decisions as they experiment. Consequently, children's learning is not constantly maximised.
- Practitioners sometimes do not fully utilise space within the group rooms highly effectively. Therefore, opportunities to offer even more challenging activities to the oldest children to fully extend their learning are sometimes missed.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Inspection activities

- The inspector held a meeting with the head of the church council and spoke to a member of staff from the local authority.
- The inspector observed activities in the pre-school and garden and talked with managers, practitioners and children.  
The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation, evidence of suitability of practitioners and a range of other documentation, including safeguarding procedures and self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector viewed all areas of the building and garden used by the children.
- The inspector took into account the views of parents and external agencies spoken to on the day.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.

## Inspector

Katrina Rodden

## Full report

### Information about the setting

St Marks Pre-school was registered in 1974 on the Early Years Register. It operates from St Marks Community Centre in the Brickhill area of Bedford and is managed by the church council. The pre-school serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The pre-school employs 14 members of childcare staff. Of whom, the manager is qualified to degree level, one member of staff is a qualified teacher and 10 members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, term time only and a holiday club is offered depending on demand. Sessions are from 8.30am to 5.30pm, with a breakfast club from 8.30am to 9am and the lunch club from 12 noon to 12.45pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 75 children attending. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children, who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- consolidate children's independent learning by allowing them even more time to organise themselves, think through solutions and use their developing skills and knowledge
  
- make the most of the available space within the 'Top Marks' group room by providing even more challenging resources to stimulate and extend children's learning to the full.

## Inspection judgements

### How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children are happy and motivated as they play and learn in the pre-school. By using three group rooms, practitioners can vary children's activities to focus on different areas of learning or complexity depending on their age and developmental stage. Therefore, practitioners provide suitable activities to move children to the next stage in their development. However, on rare occasions, practitioners in the smallest room, used by the oldest children, do not use the space to the best effect. They sometimes use valuable floor space for resources, such as a small climbing cube, which do not offer the most challenge to further extend children's learning and physical development. Consequently, children's progress is not constantly maximised. All practitioners accurately observe children's progress and effectively use the information they gather to plan activities that are based on their interests and emerging skills and knowledge. Through this, children remain

engaged as they investigate and explore, promoting effective learning. For example, practitioners fill a sand tray with leaves and twigs, which children have collected from the garden. They use small sticks to move the leaves and find models of mini-beasts and garden bugs. Practitioners encourage children to study the creatures through magnifying glasses and draw them on a sheet of paper. Practitioners label the drawings, so that other children can visit the table and see what has been collected. Children squeal with delight as a live spider emerges from under a leaf and they enthusiastically watch it and try to find it again as it disappears. Practitioners skilfully use open questions to encourage children to describe what they have found, supporting their developing vocabulary and speech. As children move around activities, practitioners use a variety of teaching methods to promote their learning. On occasions, however, practitioners are a little over eager to support children. They do not always give children sufficient time to solve problems themselves and formulate their answers before practitioners show, explain or answer for them. Consequently, children's learning is not always fully extended through independent investigation and experimentation.

Practitioners take children to a fenced outside area during each session in which they continue to learn as they play. They enjoy collecting buckets of water and use a selection of brushes to 'paint' the fence, climbing frame and wheeled toys to develop skills needed for writing. As it is not possible for children to have free access to the outside space all the time, they establish a daily routine and timetable similar to that experienced at school. Practitioners encourage children to join more structured activities to help prepare them for school. They follow instructions in music and movement sessions and enjoy sharing news from home while their peers sit quietly in a circle and listen. Practitioners support children to share resources, take turns and recognise their names printed on cards. They teach them how to use a keyboard, so that they can print their name on a computer and help them to write their names on paper. Children move to the next stage in their learning and consequently, they are prepared for their subsequent move to school.

Practitioners gather information from parents to determine children's starting points in their development when they first begin to attend the pre-school. After the summer holidays, all parents update information with key progress and new interests children have. This helps practitioners to identify any areas of development that need additional support. It also assists them to plan activities effectively by incorporating children's individual next steps in learning and interests. Consequently, children continue to make good progress in all areas of learning. Practitioners support children, who speak English as an additional language well. They ask parents to provide key words in the children's home language. Practitioners speak clearly to children and use small cards with pictures to reinforce the meaning of words and phrases. Through this, children make good progress in their emerging language development and gaps in their progress quickly close. Practitioners quickly establish good relationships with both children and parents and share ideas with them to continue to expand learning opportunities at home. This, consequently, allows children to make good progress at home too. Practitioners regularly share reports of children's development and progress recorded in individual learning journals with parents. Additional methods allowing parents secure electronic access to their children's information is slowly being introduced, increasing accessibility and communication between practitioners and parents. Practitioners complete statutory progress checks for children between the age of two and three years. They use their good knowledge of

children's development and seek additional information from parents to give an all-round view of their progress.

### **The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children**

Children quickly settle at pre-school and make friends. Practitioners gently remind children of the rules, to be kind to each other, to share and to tidy up. Positive behaviour is rewarded as children get to choose a bright star, on which their achievement is written before it is displayed on the wall for parents and carers to see. Through this, children are motivated to behave very well within the pre-school. By maintaining consistent boundaries that children understand, practitioners foster an environment in which they feel emotionally secure. In turn, children rapidly become active learners and make good progress in all areas of development.

Managers and practitioners have established a gradual admission process to help young children settle and become familiar with practitioners, peers and routines. Practitioners gather information about individual learning and care needs for children. They welcome parents to stay and settle their children into the pre-school. Coupled with this, there is an effective and flexible key-person system, enabling children to quickly build up a trusting relationship with all practitioners. A key person is assigned to individual children, who is responsible for communicating with parents and ensuring all observational information is recorded and maintained. Practitioners rotate around the group rooms but spend special time with their assigned children. Therefore, children are known and cared for by all practitioners equally. At the end of each session, practitioners share significant information about the day with parents, maintaining a clear two-way channel of communication. The key person effectively communicates with other settings and agencies that are involved with specific children, so that any gaps in learning can be addressed. During the term prior to starting school, early years teachers from local primary schools visit the pre-school to meet the children. Practitioners and children also visit the schools. Practitioners use circle time to talk about school and to answer children's questions. Consequently, children are emotionally prepared for school to help make the move as smooth as possible.

Practitioners encourage children to adopt healthy lifestyle choices. Children independently wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Physical activity is promoted to keep children fit, for example, through regular dancing sessions within another part of the building. Outside, children climb on a wooden frame, balance on beams and ride on wheeled toys. By using these resources, children make good progress in their physical development. Practitioners offer children snack over an extended time, so that they can eat when they are hungry. Here, practitioners and children sit and talk about why we need a balanced diet. Children are supported to butter their bread and pour their own drinks. Practitioners pour a manageable amount of milk or water into a small jug for children to use to transfer the liquid into their own cup, allowing even the youngest children to achieve the task. Through this, children develop a sense of responsibility, muscle control and enhance their speaking and listening skills as they communicate with others. Practitioners also teach children how to manage developmental and age-appropriate risk as they use knives to cut their food. Parents can opt for children to stay for lunch within the pre-school. They provide a healthy packed lunch for children to eat with their friends.

## **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision**

Following their last inspection, Ofsted issued a number of actions to improve and conducted a subsequent monitoring visit. Managers have made considerable improvements to address all the actions raised. The manager and church council have worked together to improve the security of the whole building, ensuring that anyone visiting the community building must sign in and out, so that there is a record of who is in the building at all times. Church managers have also accompanied all practitioners and managers from the pre-school on safeguarding training provided by the local authority. This has enhanced everyone's safeguarding knowledge and understanding. In addition, it has allowed a stronger working partnership between the church council and pre-school managers. They have carried out a review of all the safeguarding policies and procedures and now have a robust system in place to keep children safe. Practitioners follow all procedures, including ensuring group registers are taken both inside and outside, to make sure all children are accounted for when moving between locations. Managers have reviewed recruitment practice to ensure that all staff are suitably qualified and safe to work with children and that a rigorous induction process is followed, so practitioners fully understand their role and all policies and practice. This is clearly documented and evaluated by managers. A review of all practitioners' roles has been undertaken and new contracts of employment issued that clearly identify routes they should take should they need to raise a concern about another practitioner or manager. Consequently, all practitioners are aware of their role and responsibilities throughout the pre-school. Managers now have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities set out within the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure all welfare, safeguarding and learning requirements are met. The management team have introduced a robust supervision programme to ensure all practitioners are effectively teaching, caring and supporting children in the pre-school. Consequently, children make good progress in all areas of their learning and development and they are kept safe at all times. Practitioners spoken to during the inspection, confidently explained how they keep children safe and how they report any concerns they might have, in order to safeguard them. Children are taught to hold hands when they walk into the garden and when they visit the adjoining park. Managers ensure that daily checks of the premises and outside area are carried out to minimise hazards. Therefore, children play and learn in a safe and secure environment.

Managers ensure that all children's records are kept up to date. They accurately monitor children's progress using a system that has been adopted by local primary schools. Therefore, consistent information can be analysed and passed onto schools when children move to them. Enhanced tracking methods also enable managers to identify trends in progress, which can trigger additional training needs for practitioners. They value training to enhance their already good understanding of how to effectively support children's learning and development. Consequently, focused professional development ensures that children receive good quality teaching to maximise their progress. Managers acknowledge the importance of self-evaluation and regularly monitor action plans previously compiled to ensure they have been implemented and followed up. They actively seek feedback from parents, local authority and other professionals, who work closely with the pre-school to

ensure the service, which they provide, reflects the needs of children and parents. All the parents spoken to on the day of the inspection, were supportive of the pre-school and very pleased with the good progress their children are making.

Partnerships with parents and external agencies are very strong. Managers work closely with them to ensure that any emerging gaps in development are closed as quickly as possible. Practitioners are skilled at quickly identifying any emerging delay and promptly seek advice and support, so that no child falls behind.

## What inspection judgements mean

### Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

## Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

## Setting details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	219169
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford Borough
<b>Inspection number</b>	979091
<b>Type of provision</b>	
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	0 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	52
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	75
<b>Name of provider</b>	St Marks Church Council Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23/04/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01234 312634

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## Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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