

# St Michaels Pre-School Play Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127614
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jackie Liffen
<b>Setting Address</b>	Village Hall, Grange Road , St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6TJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	Brigitte Watkins
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Michael's Pre-School is privately owned and has been registered since March 1999. It operates from the village hall in the St Michael's area of Tenterden. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children aged from two and a half to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 receive funding for early education. Children tend to come from the local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports some children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. All of them hold an appropriate early years qualifications. The group receives support from an early years advisory teacher.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to understand simple good hygiene practices as staff encourage them to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating. There is no running hot water connected to the wash basins and children do not always independently wash their hands after visiting the toilet. Children are generally protected from infection as staff try to be proactive in keeping the environment clean and use anti-bacterial cleanser to wipe tables before snack time. Children rest whenever they need to on the cushions in the book corner. However, sometimes both these and the floor are dusty. Staff protect children from the spread of germs by ensuring that parents do not send infectious children to the setting.

Children take part in regular physical activity as they play in the secure outdoor area and indoors they have lots of opportunities to run around, play on wheeled toys and undertake whole group exercises at the end of the large hall.

Children are well nourished because staff give them a selection of fruit to eat at snack time together with a choice of drink. Their special dietary requirements are adhered to because staff implement any special requests from parents. Children help themselves to a drink of water throughout the session if they are thirsty.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in welcoming, secure premises where they generally play safely indoors and outdoors. They sit on carpets, or lay on the wooden floor which is checked by the supervisor each morning to ensure that no dangerous substances are left behind after the last users of the hall. Children do not access the kitchen.

Children sit at low level, age-appropriate tables and chairs to undertake some activities. These help to make sure that all children are included and become involved in the activities on offer. Children experience regular fire drills to ensure that all of them quickly become familiar with the procedures. They are learning to keep themselves safe as staff frequently remind them to behave well and tell them not to do something if it seems inappropriate. Children avoid potentially dangerous situations because the staff keep covers on the electrical sockets and cover radiators so that children do not touch them. Children's welfare is safeguarded by staff who have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. Any concerns are passed to the supervisor who deals with them in a professional and confidential manner so that children's well-being and development is enhanced.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to recognise their own names when they first enter the setting as their parents help them find their name labels to put in a box. They then quickly become involved in a range of planned activities which are put around the hall to promote their learning through play. For example, most of the girls gravitate towards the area containing a number of dolls whilst the boys tend to run towards the wheeled toys at the end of the hall. Children are becoming used to following directions as they move from one end of the hall to another whilst

staff clear away equipment and prepare snacks or different activities. However, it takes a while for them to settle during whole group activities and not all of them are totally involved in this type of play. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the needs of individual children and keep careful records so that by the time children start school, they settle quickly and are ready to learn. Each child is expected to undertake a specific learning activity each day.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound theoretical knowledge of the Foundation Stage and formulate educational plans in order to help each child progress sufficiently well to reach their potential. Each child is expected to learn through directed play most of the time, but sometimes staff miss opportunities to consolidate spontaneous educational opportunities and as a result children lose interest quickly in some activities.

Children are learning to interact socially both with adults and their peers. They develop their own imaginative games and have a number of conversations between themselves. For example, two children decide to have a crawling race and talk and giggle throughout their journey to the back of the hall. Some children are becoming confident to make decisions when they decide initially what to play with from the selection of toys left on tables. Children use a resource board of pictorial prompts to independently choose activities. Children are learning to do things for themselves when some staff try to encourage them to pour out drinks for themselves and choose what type of fruit they like to eat. Each child is also expected to wipe the table clean after snack time. However, children tend to expect adults to help them achieve things like putting on dressing-up clothes and sometimes staff automatically help them without first encouraging them to do it for themselves. Children generally respond to adults telling them what to do especially when a member of staff calls across the hall telling them to be careful on the wheeled toys.

Most children listen and respond with enjoyment and attention to stories, songs and rhymes. For example, two children sit together on the floor looking at books having a detailed conversation about the pictures. Although staff make an effort to encourage children to write their names and simple words, they miss opportunities to build on children's abilities and interests. For instance children often pick up pencils to make marks on paper, sometimes holding the pencil awkwardly. Children are given opportunities to investigate different materials and occasionally have the use of a computer. They are also directed towards playing with calculators and mobile telephones on a regular basis. Children do not often independently investigate different aspects of maths such as measuring and weighing, and when staff encourage them to count they tend to clap or count fingers rather than count the actual objects. Children have lots of opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form when they experience painting using different media such as sponges and build up collages with a range of different materials. They also enjoy experimenting with musical instruments and excitedly join in action rhymes which they all enjoy. Children spend time using their imaginations and developing physical skills during the session at the end of the hall where they speedily use wheeled toys to involve themselves in a number of different games. They also relish playing outside in the fresh air where they enjoy playing with the provided resources such as balls.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are equally valued, respected and included in the activities of the group. Staff show great concern for the problems of some children and put a great deal of effort into working

with parents and professionals to help alleviate these and improve children's lives. Children develop extremely well socially and integrate easily into the group. Children benefit from a number of activities and resources which help them to value diversity. For example, they assimilate knowledge from the variety of posters around the room depicting other countries and languages. They celebrate a range of religious festivals and play with toys such as the multi-national play figures and black dolls; they also use skin-toned crayons to draw and colour images of themselves. Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Adults work in close partnership with parents and carers in order to help children with specific needs develop and progress. They introduce unique ways of promoting children's security such as the display where children put cards depicting activities onto a rope and remove them as the session passes. Staff share the care with parents and professionals and give careful consideration as to how best to help each child.

Children are beginning to learn to respond to appropriate expectations for their behaviour, especially when staff take time out to crouch down to speak to them at their level. However, the hall becomes very noisy and sometimes staff raise their voices; some children tend to react accordingly and do not understand or act as expected when given instructions. Although children are usually directed in their games, they are learning to work harmoniously with others as they wait their turn or gather into a special corner to initiate their own imaginative games. Children gain in self esteem because staff take every opportunity to congratulate them when they achieve something. For example, a staff member calls out to a child at snack time, telling him to sit still on his chair; she then later praises him for doing this.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are generally very pleased with the way their children quickly settle in the group and have fun during the sessions. Staff make every effort to work closely with parents and carers so that children's continuity of care is enhanced and they become secure within the setting. Although some parents are not aware of the progress their children are making, key workers ensure that children's development records are kept up to date and children take home folders containing any appropriate work that they carry out during the morning, together with notes from their key workers. Parents are not fully informed about the procedures of the setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most children thrive in the setting where the staff become familiar with the individual needs of each child and provide a very happy environment for each one. The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Children do well in the setting because the staff undertake courses to increase their knowledge and ability and they then put their competence into practise to benefit children. Children's well-being is maintained because adults give regard to the available space and modify it by creating corners for children to play in. Staff spend time clearing and cleaning the hall at the end of the session so that fewer are available to work directly with the children; as a result children do not always respond to expectations. Record keeping systems are used well to meet children's needs and the provider puts all relevant regulations into practise. Key workers keep a record of how each child is progressing so that their development needs are identified and made clear to parents. Children's security is maintained because their records are stored confidentially and kept for a period of at least 10 years.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the group were asked to ensure that children have access to fresh drinking water at all times. Children are now able to help themselves to a drink of water at any time from the jug situated on a table at the side of the room. Individual times of arrival and departure are now recorded on the register.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that surfaces where children lay down and rest are clean
- ensure hand washing facilities comply with Environmental Health requirements
- up-date the written statement that provides details to be followed if parents have a complaint and ensure that all parents have access to up-to-date policies and procedures for the group
- reduce the noise level in the hall so that staff do not have to raise their voices.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- take more opportunities to introduce children to pre-maths during the course of the session
- ensure that sufficient attention is given to children as they begin to extend their pre-writing skills.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)