

# St Michaels Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 127614  
**Inspection date** 10/03/2011  
**Inspector** Jenny Kane

**Setting address** Village Hall, Grange Road, St Michaels, Tenterden, Kent,  
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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 Michael's Pre-School is privately owned and has been registered since 1999. It operates from the village hall in the St Michael's area of Tenterden. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 37 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group. The pre-school provides funded early education for three and four year olds. It is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 12pm during term time only. The pre-school serves the local area and surrounding area. Links with the nearby school have been established. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who learn English as an additional language. There are eight staff working with the children. Of these six staff are qualified to level three or above. Two of the staff are completing a degree level course. The pre-school holds the Kent Quality Mark.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enjoy positive relationships with staff who support them well during play. They make good progress in most areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have a good knowledge of how children learn, are well qualified and have a good mix and range of experiences. They strive to provide an inclusive service for all children and their families and work extremely well with parents and other professionals to ensure children's individual and cultural needs are met. Capacity to improve is good because the manager and her staff work well together as a team to identify areas for improvement and build on existing strengths.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- support children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world by offering opportunities for them to explore and learn about their local community

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

The owner/manager works in the pre-school on a daily basis leading her team by example and with enthusiasm. She is clear about her role and responsibilities and

her knowledge of child protection is good. Effective safeguarding policies are in place, clearly understood by staff and shared with parents. Staff are vigilant about safety and share the task of risk assessment, ensuring all areas used by children are safe. Although this is a pack-away group, the staff work very hard to make the very best of the available space. They transform the hall into an area which is stimulating and conducive to children's learning. This is achieved by using bright material to provide different activity areas, the good quality resources are attractively organised, posters and photographs are at children's eye-level, self-selection is very much encouraged as is the free-flow system into the garden. The staff have taken recent steps to become as sustainable as possible and children are involved in recycling projects.

Staff ratios are high, rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures are in place, staff are well qualified and suitable to work with the children. Induction, ongoing supervision, regular staff meetings and appraisals help to support staff. The manager is clear about her aims, includes staff in the process of identifying weaknesses, and as a result they are eager to look at new ways of working and making changes. Staff make full use of training to update their skills and knowledge, they are proactive in sharing new knowledge and ideas and this demonstrates a good commitment to continuous improvement. Previous recommendations have been addressed, the use of self-evaluation and good team work have raised the outcomes for children. Equality and diversity are promoted well, staff have a good understanding of children's individual backgrounds, any children who have specific learning requirements are well supported and staff are quick to obtain support by actively working with parents and other professionals.

Partnerships with parents and carers, other providers and professionals are a key strength of the pre-school. The manager and her staff have been proactive in forging these highly effective links which results in excellent continuity, the meeting of every child's needs and their smooth transition into school. The use of contact books with other early years providers ensures continuity and a coherent approach to children's learning. When children first start, parents are encouraged to stay and settle their children. Children are allocated a key person who works with the parent to find out as much information as possible about what their child can do and establish their starting points. This, and other information, helps parents to be fully involved in supporting their children's learning and development. For example, posters about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, photographs and displays show activities which relate to the areas of learning, termly newsletters and consultations. As a result, parents feel able to share information with their key person and do so confidently. All the mandatory records and documentation are regularly updated and readily available to all parents. The manager is very keen to gather parents' opinions and views and does this through questionnaires and verbal discussions. Parents are very happy with the service and express many positive views when asked for feedback. They particularly comment on the friendliness and approachability of the staff, they know who their child's key person is; they feel they can discuss any issues and that their views are listened to. They also value the Monday toddler sessions which help their younger children to get to know staff ready for their transition into the pre-school.

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

Children are achieving and progressing well towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points. Staff support children well, plan a balance of activities which are challenging and based upon their observations and assessments. The majority of activities are child initiated. Children have positive relationships with staff and benefit from good individual attention. This has a positive impact on their behaviour which is very good. Children are heavily involved in decision making, they are fully included in what they do and where they play, they share and cooperate well and are aware of other children's feelings.

When children arrive they self-register by finding their name card which they put into a box. They bring their book bag and choose a new book in the well stocked library area. Parents stay for a while to settle their children and talk to staff. During group registration children say 'Good Morning' to staff and their friends using Maketon signing. They count that there are nineteen children and because one child is French, they also count in French. During this time children make decisions about some of the activities they would like out and help to complete the pictorial timetable. Children are independent in their play, they move about choosing from the resources which are out and confidently ask for other items. There are many opportunities for children to use mathematics during activities for example children think and remember items when they join in a memory game. A group of children have a wonderful time finding and counting animals in the rubber chippings. Children have access to a good supply of gadgets and toys to work out how things work. They use digital cameras and the laptop computer frequently. They demonstrate good skills on the computer, confidently selecting programmes and controlling the mouse. When the queue is long, staff use a five minute sand-timer. Children respond really well to this and happily wait their turn.

There is a good supply of resources which promote diversity and positive images of society. The pre-school celebrates various festivals and celebrations during the year. However, there are very few opportunities for children to discover their local community because other than visits to the nearby school, they do not go on outings or walks. There are excellent opportunities for children to develop healthy lifestyles and engage in physical play each day. They are able to use the garden even in wet weather because the group have invested in waterproof suits. Children frequently choose to play outside and thoroughly enjoy being in the fresh air. The garden is in the process of further development. There is plenty of indoor space to move about and one area is designated for physical play. Both indoors and outside children confidently ride bikes and show very good understanding of their own and other's safety during play. One child using the rocker discovers she can use it on her own if she positions herself in the middle and puts her arms out to balance. Other children try this and staff encourage sensible risk taking. Another child wears a crash helmet 'to keep safe' while riding about on a bike. Several children use the big foam feet and walk about balancing on these. Other examples of children's understanding about keeping safe are regular fire drills, knowing why they need to clear up after themselves and through many of the activities. For example, they

enjoy visits from the local fire brigade who reinforce fire awareness, road safety and 'stranger danger'.

Children demonstrate a high understanding of the importance of good personal hygiene and healthy eating while at the preschool. They enjoy very healthy snacks and choose when they have this at the 'snack bar'. Children automatically wash their hands in the hand washing unit, help themselves to drinks, choose and cut up their own fruit and when finished they help to clear away. One child wipes up a spill for herself while others discuss which foods are good for them. In addition children learn where food comes from through growing vegetables and herbs in the garden. They enjoy cooking activities, sample different food for example when celebrating festivals like Chinese New Year, and have regular visits from a dental nurse.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

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

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