

Inspection of St. Mark's Pre-School

St. Marks Church Hall, Guildford Road, Normandy, GUILDFORD, Surrey GU3 2DA

Inspection date: 16 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children arrive eager and keen to learn. They separate well from parents, as staff welcome them warmly and settle them into the pre-school. Children form close bonds with staff and show that they feel safe and secure in their care. Children respond positively to the warm interactions staff provide.

Children have access to good-quality educational experiences in the pre-school. They gain a wealth of useful skills that prepare them well for their move on to school. The manager and staff use children's interests, and their understanding of what children know and can do, to provide activities that engage children well. For example, children spend extended periods of time building a range of towers and ramps with large wooden blocks. Staff encourage them to explore the differently sized bricks they use and skilfully introduce mathematical ideas such as comparison and height.

Staff know what children need to learn next and quickly identify when they may need extra support. They make sure they provide an inclusive curriculum that is ambitious for all children in their care, particularly children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All children are making good progress in their learning and development.

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

- Children with SEND are exceptionally well supported. Staff respond quickly to children's learning needs. They use information from observations to identify any gaps in learning. Leaders work very well with external agencies to ensure that children make good progress and can access the curriculum fully. They welcome advice and targeted training opportunities for staff, to help them deliver interventions such as 'bucket time' to children who would benefit most.
- Staff focus on children's early communication and language development, particularly for children with SEND. They talk with children and use gestures and signs to support their understanding. They use picture cards to help children understand what is happening next. Staff share signs with parents, so children can continue their learning at home.
- Children develop independence by choosing their own snacks and pouring their drinks. After they have eaten, they wash their cups and bowls before placing them on the rack to dry. Children follow instructions and put their toys away when asked. These skills will help prepare them for the next stage of their learning.
- Staff are good role models for children. They prioritise opportunities to teach children about their feelings and emotions. For example, as children spend time in the newly created calm area, they have the opportunity to think and reflect on

what is happening around them. They snuggle in the cosy area listening to stories with staff, which helps them make connections with how they are feeling.

- Children have good opportunities to be physically active each day. They engage in regular yoga exercises to support them to be ready to learn. Children comment, 'This helps my sore back,' as they stretch and bend sideways like a 'rainbow'. Forest school sessions provide pre-school children with opportunities to learn about the world around them, and to develop stamina and their large-muscle skills.
- The manager places great importance on partnerships with parents and professionals. She has developed lots of ways of including parents in their children's learning. For example, parents are able to attend a Mother's Day open morning to gain an insight into their children's pre-school experience. Parents report positively on the care and support they and their children receive, especially for those who need a little extra helping hand.
- The manager is reflective of her provision and has a strong vision for the pre-school. Supervision and performance monitoring procedures ensure that teaching practice is regularly reviewed. Staff access training and professional development opportunities so they can continue to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Children have opportunities to play on their own and with their friends and to join larger group sessions during the day. Taking part in large-group activities helps children develop their personal and social skills, while learning from each other. However, some carpet sessions are quite long, and younger children struggle to maintain attention and focus as a result.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. Robust recruitment and ongoing supervision systems are in place, ensuring that all staff are suitable to work with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know the signs that could indicate a child is at risk. They understand the correct procedures to follow if they have concerns about children's welfare. Staff encourage children to manage their own risks and teach them how to keep themselves safe. They complete daily checks to identify hazards and reduce risks in the pre-school environment.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure that the length of time for carpet sessions supports the youngest children effectively to have a positive impact on their continued learning and good progress.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY461229
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10276430
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	28
Name of registered person	St. Mark's Pre-School Limited
Registered person unique reference number	RP532486
Telephone number	07717078435
Date of previous inspection	14 July 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Mark's Pre-School is situated in Normandy, in Surrey. It registered under its current private ownership in 2013. The pre-school operates during term time, from 9.15am to 2.30pm on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, and 9.15am to 12.15pm on a Tuesday and Friday, when it operates a forest school provision. There are five members of staff, four of whom are qualified to level 3 or above. In addition to this, the manager and two other members of staff have relevant forest school qualifications at level 3. The pre-school receives funding to provide free early education for children aged two, three and four.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Nina Lambkin

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector observed staff's interactions with the children, indoors and outdoors, and the impact of these on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the preschool and discussed the early years curriculum provided.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector held discussions with the manager, staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation, including evidence of the suitability of staff.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a group activity.

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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