

# Inspection of Preschool@stmarks

St. Mark's Church, St. Marks Road, Chester CH4 8DE

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Inspection date: 31 January 2025

|                                              |                |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>    |
| The quality of education                     | <b>Good</b>    |
| Behaviour and attitudes                      | <b>Good</b>    |
| Personal development                         | <b>Good</b>    |
| Leadership and management                    | <b>Good</b>    |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not applicable |

## What is it like to attend this early years setting?

### The provision is good

Children's happiness and well-being are prioritised in this nurturing pre-school. Staff and managers understand the importance of supporting children to gain confidence and feel safe. They provide home visits for all new children. This helps the team to find out about the child and their family and supports a positive transition to the setting. As a result, children settle quickly among familiar adults.

Children arrive with excitement for their sessions at this nurturing pre-school. They are greeted individually at the door by the caring team and quickly settle at an activity of their choosing. Staff and managers get to know all children and they begin to develop trusting relationships. This helps children to build strong bonds with individuals who become their key person.

Children strengthen their muscles as they practise going up and down the steps of the indoor slide. Staff wait at the bottom to maintain children's safety as they explore different ways of moving down the slide. They smile with glee after safely sliding headfirst. Children practise rolling different vehicles down the slope. They take turns with their friends, saying 'ready, steady, go' before letting go. Children share resources with support from the caring team.

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

- Staff and managers recognise the importance of children being able to make choices about their learning. This means that activities are selected through children's input. For instance, staff observe children's play and talk to them about their interests. They provide activities, such as tracks and vehicles, that they know children enjoy. Staff join children in their play to support their learning. However, the curriculum is not yet fully embedded, which means that staff are not always fully aware of how they can challenge and consolidate children's learning.
- Children attending this pre-school make good progress with their speech and language. Staff and managers talk to children clearly and support the development of their key vocabulary. For instance, when playing alongside children with small animals, staff clearly name each animal. Children repeat this language and use it confidently in their play. Children demonstrate excellent listening and attention during circle times. They join in with singing and take turns to identify their name and photograph.
- Staff and managers support children to manage and regulate their strong emotions. They talk to children about how they are feeling and allow them to express themselves openly. Staff and managers are positive role models and demonstrate kindness to all members of the pre-school. They create reward systems for children who sometimes struggle to follow rules and boundaries.

Children are proud of themselves when they receive a sticker for being kind and helpful.

- Children are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles. Staff teach children about the use of toothbrushes and support families with visits from the local dentist. Children are offered a variety of fruit each day and have fresh water readily available in their bottles. They practise buttering their own crackers at snack time and eat healthy food at lunchtime. Sometimes, however, children are not given the opportunity to try to do things for themselves. For instance, they are not always encouraged to try to put their own coats on.
- Staff and managers have developed positive relationships with parents. They communicate effectively and share important information between each other. Parents are informed about their children's progress and receive feedback on their weekly activities. They say that their children have blossomed during their time in pre-school and have developed their awareness of road safety through regular walks around the local area.
- There are appropriate systems in place to monitor children's development. Staff and managers take swift action when they feel that a child is not making the expected level of progress. They liaise appropriately with parents to share concerns and make necessary referrals to outside agencies. Parents, staff and other agencies work together to develop strategies that support children to develop. This means that children make good progress from their starting points.
- Recent changes to the leadership and management of the pre-school have been carried out sensitively, and staff have felt supported throughout the process. Leaders and managers respond positively to change and have positive visions for the future of the pre-school. Professional development opportunities are encouraged throughout the team, and staff understand some of their training needs. However, staff supervision is not yet fully developed. This means that staff are not always made aware of how they can improve their teaching skills further.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

## What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to implement the curriculum more precisely, so that interactions are consistently effective at extending and consolidating children's knowledge and learning intentions are met
- support staff to understand how to encourage children to develop their

independence skills further

- strengthen supervision opportunities for staff, supporting them to reflect on their practice and develop their teaching even further.

## Setting details

|                                                    |                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>                     | 2690337                            |
| <b>Local authority</b>                             | Cheshire West and Chester          |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                           | 10368167                           |
| <b>Type of provision</b>                           | Childcare on non-domestic premises |
| <b>Registers</b>                                   | Early Years Register               |
| <b>Day care type</b>                               | Sessional day care                 |
| <b>Age range of children at time of inspection</b> | 2 to 4                             |
| <b>Total number of places</b>                      | 32                                 |
| <b>Number of children on roll</b>                  | 12                                 |
| <b>Name of registered person</b>                   | Preschool@stmarks CIO              |
| <b>Registered person unique reference number</b>   | 2690334                            |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                            | 07928832831                        |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>                 | Not applicable                     |

## Information about this early years setting

Preschool@stmarks registered in 2022. There are currently five staff working directly with children, four of whom have appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 or above. Sessions are from 9.15am until 1.15pm on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Sessions on a Wednesday are from 9.15am until 12.15pm. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

## Information about this inspection

### Inspector

Ali Myers

## Inspection activities

- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want the children to learn.
- Children told the inspector about their friends and what they like to do when they are at pre-school.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The manager showed the inspector documentation to demonstrate the suitability of staff.

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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