



St Mary's Catholic Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305324
Inspection date	07 March 2006
Inspector	Ron Goldsmith
Setting Address	Belgrave Avenue, Congleton, CW12 1HT
Telephone number	01260 297933
E-mail	
Registered person	Parents Committee of St Mary's Catholic Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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.

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. Mary's Catholic Pre-school is affiliated to the Catholic Primary school in Congleton, in whose grounds it sits. It is administered by a committee of parents and operates from a newly erected mobile building consisting of two large playrooms, kitchen area and toilets and an outside play area. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 40 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 22 funded 3

year and 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Full day care is offered so that children can attend two sessions in one day and more than five sessions in one week. The lunch time is an optional link time between the normal sessions, when children staying must bring in a packed lunch. The setting currently supports children with special needs, although none currently attend. There are no children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during term times. Sessions are from 9.00 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15; the lunch club operates from 11.45 to 12.45.

There are six members of staff, of whom three, including the supervisor, hold NVQ level 3 qualification in childcare and one member is working towards NVQ level 2 in childcare. The group is supported by a teacher from the Early Years Development Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a nutritious and healthy diet as they eat freshly prepared snacks prepared by staff and packed lunches, which are provided by parents. Their special dietary needs are well met through a regular exchange of information between parents and childcare staff. Children's health and hygiene is satisfactorily promoted by staff, who implement sound procedures to reduce the risk of most cross infection risks. For example, they wear aprons and gloves when dealing with children's toilet requirements. A number of staff have food hygiene certificates and first aid certificates. Children wash their hands before meals and younger children are assisted in doing this. Children are protected from infection because staff are well informed about children's health care matters and records relating to accidents and medication are completed. However, the arrangements for making water available at all times do not sufficiently guard against the risk of cross infection because insufficient clean cups are available.

The children are developing skills in moving around the environment confidently and with good control, showing an awareness of themselves and others as they negotiate pathways. However, children have limited opportunities to enjoy vigorous and energetic outdoor play. They show a good awareness of space, themselves and others and manoeuvre around obstacles skilfully. Indoors, children enjoy jumping up and down vigorously to songs and nursery rhymes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play, eat and rest in a warm, safe and welcoming environment. Children make choices from a variety of resources, all of which are clean and in good condition and which promote their development in all areas. The indoor areas are secure and staff adequately monitor and assess risks. Evidence of children's play

and activities is used to create wall displays, which help to make the environment bright and attractive.

Children learn to manage their own safety, as staff teach them about potential hazards, such as running within the provision or sitting properly on chairs. Safety measures are in place, such as socket covers, fire fighting equipment and restricted access to the building. Staff are aware of child protection issues and the signs to look for. Children are protected by the staff's satisfactory knowledge, understanding and implementation of effective child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and enjoy their time in the provision. Those who are new to the nursery are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Staff establish positive relationships with children, helping them feel settled and secure. Early communication skills are well supported through good adult to child interactions. Children achieve well and benefit from a broad range of activities which promote their all round development. Children learn to explore and investigate using their senses, as they feel the textures of different materials in art and craft sessions and messy play. Staff have no training in the Birth to three matters framework to inform their planning and practice and therefore, it is not incorporated into practice.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and early learning goals, which is reflected in the range of varied activities planned. As a result, children make satisfactory progress.

Children are imaginative in their play and enjoy extensive role play in activities, such as hairdressing where they style hair, make appointments, operate the telephone and cash registers. These activities all contribute to children's understanding and thought about the world around them, how things work and a sense of time and place. Several structured group activities during the day help children share their interests and ideas. They talk about the time of year and the weather and they help to put this information on to a calendar.

Children enjoy some physical activities indoors as they use appropriate climbing and balancing equipment, but outdoor physical and energetic play is limited. They are beginning to count and recognise different shapes and to understand calculation, such as addition and subtraction. Children recognise their names and sometimes the names of others; they are confident at linking sounds with letters and freely access the writing table showing their early writing skills. Children's behaviour is good, they play well together and show care and concern for each other. Children sing and accompany some songs with actions. Creative play is enjoyed by all children as they paint, draw and use a variety of materials in their art and craft work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the nursery, settle well and are developing satisfactory relationships with each other and staff. Settling-in procedures help them to develop a sense of community within their own group and the whole setting. They are developing a positive attitude to others, sometimes praising other children for work they have done, such as a spider that one child has painted. They gain a sound understanding of the wider world and the community through celebrating and participating in festivals.

Children make satisfactory progress in understanding their own and other people's emotions, and how to deal with them, through staff discussions with them. The provision has effective systems to care for children with special needs, although none currently attend. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in the nursery.

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents. Children settle well and staff liaise closely with parents to gain individual information, such as likes and dislikes, or familiar home routines, and a key worker system ensures that there is consistent care provided for children. There are good opportunities for informal exchanges of information, which ensures that children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes. However, formal opportunities, such as parents evenings, have not been established and this makes it difficult for parents to receive sufficient information about the Foundation Stage curriculum or their children's progress. This limits their ability to participate in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is underpinned by mainly comprehensive policies and procedures, which staff know and understand, due to effective induction procedures. Space and resources are organised well to meet the needs of the children and support the general management of the setting. Children benefit from good staff ratios, giving them plenty of individual attention.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, systems for monitoring the quality of provision and meeting staff training needs are not yet fully operational. Staff training is provided, but is not linked to appraisals and professional development in order to meet identified needs and support improvements within the setting.

Children are settled and secure in the provision, as a result of well-established daily routines and procedures. Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of organisational policies and procedures and implement this in their practice. Children engage in sufficient activities to maintain their interest and this is enhanced by the staff's knowledge of child development and children's differing needs.

Overall, St Mary's Catholic Pre-School meets the needs of the range of children for

whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the provision have ensured that staff are deployed effectively and the correct ratios are maintained. Staff engage children in a range of opportunities with questions and responses as they undertake activities. Space is well used and the environment welcoming to children. They review the written risk assessments on a regular basis, as a result, children have practised and understand the fire procedure.

Staff encourage children and value good behaviour, praising children when they have done something well. They have developed their policy and procedures document to include all the required information in accordance with the National Standards in relation to special needs and the complaints procedure and these have been shared with parents. The provision have established procedures for giving parents information, but systems to provide information about the curriculum and involve parents in their child's are insufficiently developed.

Nursery Education.

The provision have developed both medium and long term planning to ensure all elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are covered. They have developed children's learning in personal, social and emotional development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. The provision have been less successful at developing children's physical development. The educational provision identified areas of training needs; this has resulted in staff attending various courses to enhance their knowledge and skills. As a result, staff have developed skills by planning and providing more opportunities for children to learn by deploying staff effectively and ensuring children are interested and involved in activities. By fostering a spirit of cooperation and respect for others, children progress and are able to achieve in their learning. The provision have developed a system for short term planning, but which does not focus sufficiently on the specific learning aims of each activity. Staff are aware of the need for ongoing improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been two complaints about the setting since April 2004. Concerns were received in relation to National Standards: 8 - Food; 9 - Equal opportunities; 10 - Special needs and 12 - Working in partnership with parents. In the second complaint, National Standard 1, suitable person and National Standard 6, safety. Ofsted investigated the complaints. The provider was found to be complying with the National Standards and remains qualified for registration. 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.

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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):

- improve the range and quality of young children's opportunities for development by planning appropriate activities to increase their interaction with each other and with staff and through exploration of the world around them
- improve the opportunities for children to enjoy energetic and vigorous outdoor play on a frequent basis

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):

- improve partnership with parents by providing information about the curriculum and involve parents in their child's learning by sharing assessment records on a regular basis
- ensure staff are clear about what children will learn from each planned activity and improve the systems of short term planning and evaluation, ensuring that observations of children and their individual assessments are used to inform and support the learning needs of each child.
- improve leadership and management within the setting by implementing a system to monitor and evaluate the success of the education programme

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk