



St Charles RC Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226235
Inspection date	16 May 2006
Inspector	Michelle Smith
Setting Address	Bosworth Road, Measham, Derbyshire, DE12 7LQ
Telephone number	01530 515284
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Registered person	St Charles R. C. Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Charles RC Pre-school opened in 1982. They operate from a mobile classroom, with associated facilities, in the grounds of St. Charles R.C. School in the village of Measham. The children also have access to further toilets and the computer room in the school. Children have safe access to an outdoor play area which is fully enclosed and the school playing fields. The setting serves the village and the surrounding area.

The setting is registered to care for a total of 21 children per session. There are currently 50 children from two to under five years on roll. This includes 31 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Effective strategies are in place to care for children with special needs.

The setting opens five days each week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 12.00 on Monday and Friday. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the setting operate from 09:00 to 11:30. Children aged three and a half years are welcome to attend afternoon sessions from 12.30 to 15.30 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Five members of staff work directly with children, including a named special needs allocated worker. Four members of staff usually work each morning and three each afternoon session. Four members of staff have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting works cooperatively with the school and receives support from the local authority including the district special needs worker. The setting are working towards Leicester County Council's Integrated Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene routines. They know they need to wash their hands before eating food and after toileting. However, some children sit for periods of time with runny noses. Staff sometimes assist and guide them to wipe their noses swiftly, however this approach is not consistent. Tissues are freely accessible to children; however the bin to dispose of the tissues is across the other side of the room. This increases the risk of cross infection and restricts their independence. Good procedures are in place for sick and infectious children. All staff are first aid trained and all accidents are effectively recorded. This helps to prevent the spread of infection and to maintain children's good health.

Children eat healthy, nutritional snacks which are provided by the setting. A set snack time provides them with a sociable, calm, relaxed time in which they eat well. A staff member sits with some of the children as they eat. Staff work hard to encourage them to eat different foods, for example raisins. They respond well to the staff approach, try and eat different foods extending their taste horizons. Children have the choice of milk or juice during snack time. At this time, they are well hydrated. Fresh drinking water and clean cups are placed on the kitchen work surface. However, the water is not within children's reach. This means they are not sufficiently independent and cannot freely access water when they choose.

Children enjoy daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise. They ride bikes confidently and with vigour. Staff provide them with plenty of time to practise new and redefine existing physical skills. As a result, children are learning to gain greater control of their bodies, for example coordinating their legs to ride a scooter. They enjoy the challenge of crossing their fingers for the rain to stay away and complete a reasonable variety of jigsaws. As a result, children's fine motor skills are making

sound progress.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe indoor and outdoor environment. Staff effectively identify and minimise any risks through central and daily risk assessment check lists. This means children flow freely between indoor activities and can play safely outdoors. High regard is given to prioritising their safety on outings. All children wear wrist reins, a vetted coach company is used for external travel and relevant documents are carried for emergency use. Consequently, children can enjoy their trips out without risk of harm.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe through consistent boundaries within the setting, for example they know that they must not run indoors. Resources and equipment are stage appropriate, cleaned and well maintained. The environment is secure, with no unauthorised person able to access the setting and safe strategies are in place regarding the collection of children. As a result, children's safety overall is well promoted.

Children are protected from possible abuse as staff have a clear understanding of relevant child protection procedures and appropriate responses. They are aware of the signs of abuse and the role of professional agencies. All staff are vetted to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

A warm and caring environment is provided for children aged two to three years. Children enter the group confidently and settle well into free play activities. Staff are beginning to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework within planning and spontaneous activities. Children enjoy their time at the setting; they pour oats in the messy area and use their imaginations well as they care for dolls. Younger children enjoy exploring how things work, such as how the doors in the role play area open and close. They sing familiar songs with enthusiasm. They recall the words well, match actions as appropriate and lower their voices for quieter elements. This helps them to develop their early communication skills. Staff interact sensitively with the children, they sit with them in the book corner and read with them, extending their vocabulary and sit beside them when, for example completing jigsaws. This builds children's sense of security and tailors the learning to the individual child during these times.

The learning environment is organised effectively for the majority of the time, for example separate areas are created for imaginative play and quieter activities. However, when one to one creative work is planned, the motivation of other children who show an interest is not seized. Children approach the one to one table and pick up creative materials or attempt to touch the paints. These children are not always

given the opportunity to take part at the time they show great interest; instead staff redirect them to other activities. This does not build on children's natural curiosity as learners or inspire them to try new experiences.

Staff provide less confident children with comfort and reassurance. They are consistent in their approach and spend much of their time talking and listening to them. This enables children to build the skills of conversation and to have regard for others. The large majority of whole group times are well organised, for example snack time and outdoor play. However, in the morning session the story time is not always visual enough to captivate all children's imagination. Younger children are easily distracted and older nursery education funded children are not consistently challenged.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a suitable understanding of how children learn. Long term plans are displayed for staff and parents to view easily and cross reference to aspects of the curriculum. The short term plans include the focused activity, for example planting flowers and how the activity could be extended, for example watering the flowers. Although the plans are monitored to ensure all areas of learning are covered, this evaluation is not rigorous enough as there are some gaps within creative development, mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. Staff use satisfactory methods to interest afternoon children, although the wide age range of children attending the morning session results in funded children not being sufficiently challenged at all times. Children behave well as the staff have a patient and caring approach.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they enter the setting. They manage their self care well as they hang up their coats on their named peg. During activities such as stencils and pencils, children show good levels of concentration. However, their full concentration and interest is not always maintained during story time. As a result, their learning is hindered. Children are learning to manage their own behaviour as the setting rules are applied consistently. Children's language skills are making reasonable progress. They speak clearly and with confidence as they talk about pictures and models. The staff and the children talk together about familiar experiences, for example what their Dad is called and if they have a tractor at home to play on. Books are used well by the children as individuals; they access the book corner often and enjoy sharing stories with staff. Children are beginning to give meanings to their marks, for example they pretend to write on some paper for a prescription. More able children are able to write their own name and name sounds for letters. Children are beginning to know that print carries meaning although many displays and interest tables do not maximise the use of print to fully extend children's understanding.

Children are beginning to count numbers up to and beyond ten. Counting is part of the everyday routine which reinforces their learning, for example they count the amount of children going outdoors to play. Jigsaws and telephones are helping children to recognise some numerals. However, numerals are not actively displayed and used sufficiently within free play. As a result, not all children are able to

consistently recognise numerals which would be familiar to them. Children's skills of calculation are not progressing well as staff do not maximise opportunities within the session. Children do not practice their problem solving skills, for example how many children there are and therefore how many cups they will need at snack time. They know their shapes well, such as triangle and circle. Magnetic shapes help them to begin to understand how shapes join together effectively. Creative activities are helping children to understand capacity, for example the difference between full and empty.

Children develop an initial sense of time and place as they complete the weather board together. They know the day of the week and the year. Opportunities for children to explore and investigate are restricted by the organisation of some activities. Children are able to play in the outdoors when they choose, but focused activities restrict all children's participation at the point they show motivation. They are beginning to understand how and why things work, for example staff explain to them how an egg timer works, they then sit together and concentrate on the sand filtering through.

Good use of the indoor and outdoor area helps children to progress their large and small physical skills. They use one handed tools well, for example they control scissors to cut shapes. Children pedal bikes with confidence. They kick a ball with increased accuracy and enjoy chasing the balls around the outdoor area. They are learning to care for their bodies through an imaginative Doctors surgery. Children give each other pretend medicine and care for their cuddly dogs. They know that their hearts go faster when they run and that they need to eat healthy foods.

Children enjoy being imaginative. They role play familiar situations confidently and pretend to talk on the telephone as they push their dolls. During free play activities they enjoy experimenting with textures, for example smearing chalk over black paper. However, resources for focused activities are mainly selected by staff. This provides children with little opportunity to self-select appropriate resources, try out new and refine existing techniques. Most children are able to name their primary colours well, with some children knowing variations such as lilac. However, children's knowledge of colours is not always stretched, for example at group times more able children are asked to name simple colours whilst younger children are asked to name more complex ones. This demonstrates that activities are not always adjusted to suit each child's needs and that each child's learning is not consistently maximised.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy positive relationships with each other and staff. Older children show care for younger children as they help them with daily routines, such as sitting on the carpet for story time. Staff demonstrate that they know the children well. They call each child by their name and are aware of their individual medical needs, such as allergies. Each child has their own peg with their name on to hang their coats. This increases their sense of belonging and security within the group. Children develop active knowledge about the wider world as they photograph Barnaby Bear on

holidays and make dragons for Chinese New Year.

A special needs worker is funded and as a result, children with learning difficulties or disabilities are cared for in an inclusive environment. The setting have strong links with the area special needs coordinator and make sure the learning environment caters for everyone. Staff recognise the importance of working effectively with parents to share information with each child's needs being valued and respected.

Children behave well. They are learning to share equipment, such as footballs and are reminded gently by staff the importance of being kind to others. Staff have a consistent approach, they sit back and allow children the space to learn to negotiate, stepping in to guide them only when necessary. This enables children to develop a deeper understanding of right and wrong. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

All children benefit from the very effective working relationships with parents. A wide range of methods helps to keep parents up to date with the setting and well informed of their child's development. A white board displays information regarding the daily activities on offer and newsletters tell them about trips and recent events. Parents are welcomed into the setting to share their skills, such as a nurse talking about his job role. The partnership with parents of children who receive funding for nursery education is good. Information about the nursery curriculum is clearly displayed and letters are sent home to promote the link between home learning and the setting. This helps parents to become involved in their child's progress. The strong link between parents and staff ensure children's needs are fully recognised and met.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Time and space are well organised and provide children with a safe and mostly stimulating place to play, learn and develop. The effective deployment of staff means that children receive a good level of individual attention during free play times. Staff spend the majority of their time sitting directly with the children as they play and make choices. There are sound recruitment and vetting procedures in place which make sure all staff are suitable to work with children. A good training programme is implemented for all staff and many training courses have been attended. This helps to broaden children's horizons and contributes to the quality of care available. All of the required documents are in place to aid the smooth running of the setting.

The leadership and management of the setting are satisfactory. Staff are clear of their role and show high levels of familiarity with the ethos of the group. Appraisals systems are in place to support and develop staff, including managers. The setting monitor and evaluate their strengths and areas for improvement, however this has not been rigorous enough to identify gaps within the curriculum. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, recommendations were made to improve the quality and collation of documents and the way in which these were shared with parents. The setting have taken significant steps forward to improve written policies relating to fire evacuation, accidents, home injuries, medication, special needs, daily routines and child protection. All policies are now retained for a suitable period of time and are collated together in the form of an operational plan, which is easily accessible to both staff and parents. The procedure for updating the contents of the first aid box has also improved. As a result, first aid procedures and documents now work actively to promote consistency within the setting and to safeguard children's care and welfare. The setting were also requested to improve vetting procedures for all relevant persons. Procedures are now in place to ensure all committee members, staff and associated persons are suitable to work with children which increases their safety.

At the last Children Act inspection, the setting were also asked to consistently adopt good practice and example in writing children's names and to remove inappropriate books from the shelf. They were recommended to ensure the remainder are well presented, encouraging use by all children. The book shelf is now organised effectively with a wide range of suitable books attractively displayed. Children make very good use of the books and enjoy reading individually or in small groups with staff. Displays and working practice show that staff have adopted a consistent method to writing children's names. They begin in the top left hand corner and write using lower case letters. As a result, all children are developing a deeper understanding of how print carries meaning within their name.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting were asked to develop staff understanding of the curriculum, with particular focus required for mathematical and creative development. Staff are aware of some of the learning intentions for activities, for example how sticking numerals on their painted door increases children's knowledge of the world as they talk about their families and home environment. However, their knowledge of how to best promote children's development within creative and mathematical development is not applied fully within daily routines. As a result, this recommendation is carried forward to this inspection report.

The setting were also asked to improve children's access to information and communication technology (ICT) resources. Children now have reasonable access to ICT; they play on a pretend full sized computer, tapping the key board and naming the components. Smaller lap tops and additional electronic toys designed for children are easily accessible during some sessions. As a result, they are gaining an adequate understanding of the value of ICT within every day lives.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 13: Child Protection. A complaint was raised with Ofsted about the staff's knowledge of the child protection policy and procedures. An Ofsted Inspector visited the setting to discuss this and to review relevant records and documentation under National Standard 13. Based on the information and evidence obtained during the visit Ofsted are satisfied that National Standard 13 is being met appropriately and the provider 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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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):

- further promote children's independence relating to good hygiene procedures and increase their access to fresh drinking water
- improve the organisation of creative activities to seize children's motivation and enable all children take part, following their natural curiosity
- extend the use of additional resources during group story times to develop the meaning of stories and to effectively extend all children's learning.

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):

- make better use of the daily routines to promote children's understanding that print carries meaning and to increase their recognition of numerals and problem solving skills
- provide children with increased opportunities to select their own materials for creative activities, designing, joining and assembling
- ensure that activities and resources sufficiently challenge all children, particularly within the morning session.

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