



St Joseph's Swans and Cygnets Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205299
Inspection date	27 June 2006
Inspector	Valerie Fane
Setting Address	125 Newtown Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 1PF
Telephone number	01684 573016
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Registered person	St Joseph's Pre-School Committee
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Joseph's Swans and Cygnets Pre-School is a committee-run group that was registered in 1988.

It operates from a classroom within St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School and also has use of the school hall, nature trail and outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the surrounding area.

The pre-school is open from 08:30 to 15:15 Monday to Friday in school term time only. There are currently 39 children on roll. Of these 36 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Seven staff work with the children. Of these four have appropriate qualifications to Level 2 or above and one is working towards a qualification. The nursery receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop an excellent understanding of the principles of healthy eating as they enjoy healthy snacks; either brown toast or a plate of fresh and dried fruit such as grapes, apples, bananas and raisins. Children bring their own packed lunches but staff encourage them to eat the savoury items first. If they have brought fruit in their lunch box with a sticker on it they put the sticker on a map of the world to show where the fruit came from. Children's awareness of healthy eating is extended through topics on food and farms where they learn more about how food is grown and make collages of different vegetables to display in pre-school.

Children use the toilet and hand washing facilities with increasing independence and confidence. Older children easily access the soap and paper towels and understand why they must wash their hands before snack time. Children receive good care in the event of an accident or requiring medication because several staff have current first aid certificates enabling them to provide appropriate treatment. Staff complete detailed records that are signed by parents. Children who have ongoing medical needs receive excellent care because staff carry out a risk assessment of their needs and produce a suitable care plan for the individual concerned.

Children learn about the benefits of fresh air and exercise because they play outside twice a day when weather permits. They understand the effect of exercise on their bodies and know that it is important to have a drink from their own water bottle afterwards. Once a week they use the climbing and balancing apparatus in the school hall to develop those skills further. Outside they improve their balance and co-ordination as they steer a range of bikes of different sizes round the playground and learn to work together as they use bikes designed for two children at once. They improve their co-ordination further using a variety of small equipment as they have races involving rolling balls to one another or putting hoops over posts.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all risks are identified and minimised. Staff make good use of regular risk assessments to record possible

hazards and put measures in place to reduce risks to children or staff. Children learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they have regular opportunities to practise the evacuation procedures. Staff ensure all children practise by repeating the exercise on several days in the same week. Staff monitor the effectiveness of the procedures well and implement improvements. Children develop an excellent awareness of safety issues. They understand the reason for rules as they walk through the school, they know that they must not run in case they trip and that they must always hold the rail when they use the steps. Their learning is reinforced through topics that include safety issues. They look at photographs of themselves in different situations and sort them according to whether or not the child's behaviour is safe. For example, they know that the child standing on the back of a bike instead of sitting on the seat is likely to fall off and hurt themselves.

Children use an interesting range of good quality and well-maintained equipment. Smaller equipment is stored in labelled drawers at low level for children to self-select but due to space limitations larger equipment is kept in a walk-in cupboard and staff put out a selection for the children to use at each session.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and the procedures they would follow if they were to have concerns about a child in their care. Senior staff have previously undertaken training and the newly appointed child protection officer for the pre-school is currently undergoing relevant training. Children begin to understand how to protect themselves because they know that they can tell another child if they do not like their behaviour and that they can ask an adult for help if the child does not respond. They learn what to do if they get lost through outdoor games such as 'One, two, three where are you?'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages settle very well in the friendly and welcoming pre-school environment and form close relationships with staff and with their peers. Younger children develop their imagination and creativity as they explore the texture of shaving foam with their hands and add paint of different colours. They develop their hand control as they enthusiastically mix it up and make interesting patterns. Staff support children's learning and confidence; offering tools such as a paint brush to a child who is unhappy using his fingers. Younger children enjoy an interesting range of planned activities linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They make good progress because staff assess their development and set appropriate targets each term related to the criteria outlined in the framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage because staff have a secure knowledge of the six areas of learning and a clear understanding of how young children learn. Staff use a wide range of strategies to excite and enthuse children and provide a balanced mix of free play and interesting planned activities. Children's needs are met well because staff plan topics that are particularly suited to

the current group of children. Children also benefit because the planning includes links to their individual learning targets and staff regularly carry out both formal and informal observations to assess progress towards the targets.

Children increase their social skills and independence and develop excellent self-help skills because staff make superb use of every day routines to enhance children's learning. Children take turns to give out all the equipment that they need at snack time. They pour their own drinks and use scissors to open the carton with support from a member of staff if they drink milk instead of juice. One child on each table is the monitor for the day and they give everybody enough spread for their toast. If children need more spread they ask the monitor to give them some rather than helping themselves. This helps them communicate confidently with their peers and develop good friendships. Children use tools confidently as they use knives to spread their own toast. They also improve their awareness of numbers and words at snack time. They count the number of children on each table and decide which table has the most or the least number of children. They begin to recognise written words as they spot their own name when it is placed on the job list and the more able children also recognise the names of other children in the group.

Children enthusiastically join in with activities, songs and rhymes that develop their knowledge of numbers and letters and their awareness of rhyming and alliteration. They enjoy using musical instruments at circle time and extend their vocabulary as they learn to name instruments such as tambourines and maracas. They take turns to choose an instrument to play. Less confident children are supported well by staff who help them to make choices. Children sing favourite nursery rhymes and learn to play their instruments in time with the music and to stop at the end of the song. More able children extend their learning because staff encourage them to try to play with the beat of the music. All children follow instructions well and also try to play a certain number of beats on their instrument or try to imitate different rhythms.

Children show sustained interest and enthusiasm as they take part in imaginative and varied role play that is well-resourced by the staff. They mend the car in the garage using tools such as a hammer and a screwdriver. They use a car manual to find out what is wrong and also carry out and record MOT tests using a tick list. They become familiar with technology as they pretend to type letters on the keyboard and learn about the purpose of writing as they use the telephone and make a note of appointments. Children design and build their own vehicles with a wide range of construction toys including 'Lego' and 'Mobilo'. They build a small fire engine and then design a fire station that is the right size for their vehicle.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well. Children play with an interesting range of toys that supports their awareness of other cultures and our wider society such as books, musical instruments and dressing up clothes. They learn about the differing cultures of other children in their group because a parent who does not speak English as their first language visits regularly and helps

them to learn simple words such as numbers and colours in a different language. Children celebrate a variety of different festivals such as Diwali and Christmas.

Children attending the pre-school play well together and form close friendships. They generally respond positively to the clear boundaries that are set and reinforced by staff. They learn to negotiate with their friends and seek adult help if the other child will not share a toy with them. They understand the reason behind rules because staff give appropriate explanations and encourage them to think about the consequences of their actions.

Children feel secure in the pre-school because the staff develop close relationships with their parents. They encourage parents to get involved in the group by joining the committee or by sharing particular experiences or areas of expertise with the children. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their needs met well because staff liaise closely with parents and with outside agencies to set targets that are appropriate and achievable for that child.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Parents receive comprehensive information about the six areas of learning for children in the Foundation stage and a detailed sheet about the current topic. Children benefit because parents are involved in their learning. Parents discuss their child's progress at both home and pre-school with their child's key worker. Each term parents receive a written report about their child's progress in the six areas of learning with targets for their development in the next term. Parents are asked to comment on the report and contribute relevant information. Parents also receive an informative newsletter that includes general comments about how they can be involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are generally cared for in a well-organised and friendly environment but recently the registered number of children has been exceeded once a week at the end of the morning session. This compromised children's safety, but the manager took immediate steps during the inspection to rectify the situation. In other respects the organisation is good. Children benefit from the good level of staffing at each session. Their welfare is safeguarded because parents provide all required information and consents before their child attends the group and staff keep accurate attendance registers. All staff have undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks to ensure that they are suitable to be working with young children. The manager is aware of the need to inform Ofsted of very recent changes to the committee.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children flourish because the manager and her staff have a strong vision for the care and education of young children including a clear view of the importance of enabling the children to develop good personal and social skills. Staff work extremely well together as a team and children benefit from their experience and level of qualifications. They have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the group and constantly evaluate and improve their good practice. Neither the old nor the new committee have a clear understanding of their role as the registered body in monitoring the quality of the

nursery education provided.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was recommended to develop an action plan to show how staff qualification requirements would be met and to update policies and procedures regularly in line with current legislation and guidance. At the last inspection of the nursery education the key issue was to ensure that parents have free access to plans so that they can extend children's learning.

Children now benefit from the expertise of well-qualified staff as more than half of the staff are qualified to at least Level 2 and another member of staff is working towards a Level 3 qualification. Children's welfare is safeguarded because the supervisor has ensured that policies and procedures are reviewed regularly on a rolling programme at staff meetings. Consequently, most policies have been reviewed comprehensively since the last inspection and the remainder will be reviewed and updated in the near future.

Children now benefit from their parents' involvement in their learning because information about the six areas of learning is displayed in the entrance area alongside information about the current topic and the daily plan, which includes children's general learning objectives.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- ensure that the number of children on the premises at any one time never exceeds the number permitted on the registration certificate.

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):

- develop the monitoring of the quality of the nursery education by the pre-school committee.

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