



St James The Less Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY292081
Inspection date	19 June 2006
Inspector	Gillian Patricia Bishop
Setting Address	The Old School Room, Burnley Road, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 8HH
Telephone number	07901 886 506
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Registered person	St James the Less 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 James the Lees Pre-School has been registered since 2004. The group operate from the large church hall adjacent to St James the Lees Church which is situated close to Rawtenstall town centre in Rossendale. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school group at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45, term time only. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school group employs four members of staff. Of these, three including the manager hold level 3 early years qualifications and above and one is working towards a level 3 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a secure understanding about good hygiene practices which ensures they keep themselves healthy. They routinely wash their hands before eating and after using the bathroom. Children learn to promote their own good health and avoid cross infection as they are encouraged to cover their mouth when coughing and use tissues to wipe their nose. Children's individual needs are consistently met because staff seek up to date information from parents about medical and dietary needs. Staff sometimes provide activities which involve contact with animals such as guinea pigs and cats. Good consideration is given to the needs of children who may have allergies when this type of activity is planned.

Well established policies and procedures for health and safety ensure children are cared for by staff who are trained with regard to first aid and food hygiene practices. Accidents which occur are accurately recorded and reported to the manager and parents. Children's good health is further promoted by the systematic cleaning routines which staff implement daily, ensuring facilities for children remain fresh and clean.

Children develop a positive approach to healthy eating as they are provided with a variety of healthy foods and drinks during snack time. They enjoy a substantial snack and a daily portion of fruit with a choice of juice or milk. Additional drinks are made available so children are able to keep themselves independently refreshed throughout the session. Children enjoy sitting and eating with staff and other children. This provides them with valuable opportunities to talk about home and special events. Children enjoy the 'drop in' arrangement for snack as they are able to choose when they wish to take a break, which allows them to finish what they are doing before they eat. Children develop good self-help and social skills at this time because they routinely help adults by pouring their own drinks and spreading their own toppings on their crackers.

Children benefit from daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. Staff recognise the importance for children to engage in physical exercise such as running, catching and climbing to promote gross motor skills and hand eye co-ordination. Outdoor play is well organised to provide children with stimulating games and activities which encourage children to make the most of their outdoor environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and safe environment where space indoors and outdoors is well organised to ensure it is used to its full potential. Children's confidence and sense of belonging is well promoted because they are encouraged to move around freely and they know where toys and resources are kept. Children have access to a good variety of toys, equipment and resources which promote their interest and development. Additional equipment is stored in labelled drawers which allows children to self-select and make decisions about what they want to play with.

Positive steps are taken inside the setting to minimise risks to children, the priority given to staff deployment ensures children are safe and well supervised. Good consideration is given to security and emergency evacuation. Doors remain locked at all times and visitors are escorted into the premises. Regular evacuation drills ensure children are familiar with what is expected so they can be escorted safely to designated meeting points. Children are beginning to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they are reminded not to run indoors or kneel on furniture in case they fall. They learn how to use equipment such as scissors sensibly and to sit when eating in case they choke when playing. Children therefore learn, that boundaries are there to keep them safe because staff explain the consequences of their actions.

Children are protected by appropriate vetting procedures within the setting. Children also learn to protect themselves as they are sensitively introduced to issues such as stranger danger in preparation for their transition to school. Children's welfare and protection is further promoted by staff's knowledge of current child protection procedures as all staff have recently attended relevant training. Staff ensure parents are informed of the settings responsibilities with regard to child protection as a clear written policy is now given to parents at the time of placement.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children make good relationships with staff due to effective settling in arrangements which ensures they enjoy their time at playgroup. Their emotional needs are well fostered which ensures children feel happy, secure and able to ask for help when they require it, for example, with shoe laces or coats. Children are encouraged to be independent in their learning and play so they look for their name card when they arrive and they help themselves to equipment such as toys and aprons. Children are fully engaged in a variety of self chosen activities which promote their overall development.

Children approach their activities with enthusiasm and interest ensuring they take full advantage of all the activities on offer. The needs of younger children are considered within the busy environment as the organisation of toys and activities allow them to move freely and transport equipment from one area to another as they experiment in their play. However, some conflict issues occur when groups of younger and older children spend long periods of time engaging in the same activities. Staff are

developing a joint curriculum to take account of the needs of older and younger children by adapting the level of challenge to suit individual children. However, formal planning systems do not identify aspects of the curriculum which are specifically designed for the younger children.

Children enjoy creative activities, such as junk modelling, water play and painting. They make good use of their imaginations during small world play by collecting other equipment to develop their ideas. For example, children collect cars, people and animals from boxes to use alongside the bricks. Children engage in some theme work which explores topics such as, methods of transport and holiday destinations. Children are encouraged to use what they have learnt to create models of aeroplanes and cars. They develop role play situations by making trains out of big boxes and by dressing up as the ticket collectors. As a consequence, trains have become a popular feature within the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum is steadily developing through guidance and training which is enabling them to provide a generally well balanced curriculum. Staff guide children in their play and learning through purposeful questioning to promote their language and thinking. For example, when junk modelling, children are prompted to describe what they will make and what they will use to stick the boxes together. The steady introduction of continuous provision ensures children can develop their own ideas and themes to enhance their play. Activity planning represents children's current interests so they remain motivated to learn. However, planning systems do not make consistent links with the stepping stones to ensure a balanced curriculum and monitoring systems are not effectively recorded or used to ensure planning takes account of their next steps.

Children are beginning to make sound progress towards the early learning goals. They develop a sense of community within the setting which encourages them to seek the company of adults and friends. They frequently talk about home and they learn about their community through regular visitors such as, the police. Children are confident due to the praise and encouragement they receive for their efforts and achievements. They behave reasonably well as they are polite and show some willingness to share and help others. Children enjoy interactive stories which allow them to use props or join in parts of the story. However, children do not engage in activities such as circle time, to promote children's speaking and listening skills. Children benefit from generally good opportunities to mark make but the lack of a designated writing area with a wide selection of resources restricts their ability to develop their emergent writing further.

Children routinely count and are beginning to name, recognise and match numbers. They are introduced to mathematical concepts such as shape, measure and size when model making and they explore patterns when making rainbow pictures and threading beads. However, children have limited opportunities to explore simple calculation. Children enjoy constructing their own models using resources such as dough and junk materials. They are introduced to technology as they often use a computer, shop tills and remote controlled cars which they use to plan routes and

explore positional language such as, forwards, backwards, over and under.

Children frequently use a good range of media, such as sand, water, paint and dough. They have a selection of creative resources at their disposal to allow them to further explore and develop their own creative ideas. Children use their senses to describe their findings, for example, they note the texture and perfumed smell of bubbles when bathing the dolls. Their imagination is successfully nurtured as they engage in various role play scenes and story lines. Children have less opportunities to explore music and movement. Children are provided with a good range of tools, such as various sized paint brushes, glue sticks and containers for pouring to promote their physical skills. Children use a wide variety of apparatus during outdoor play which enables them to practice and develop new physical skills such as throwing, catching and climbing. Children learn the impact of exercise on their bodies as they state they are tired from running and they need to sit down.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are well known due to effective communication with parents at the time of placement. Children are allocated a key worker who effectively supports them during the settling process. On going support and communication with parents ensures staff get to know children and their families very well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported within the setting which ensures all children enjoy a fully inclusive play environment which represents their needs. Children are being introduced to basic sign language to enhance the communication between all children.

The pre-school group are committed to welcoming children from all denominations into the setting. Children are beginning to learn respect and concern for others due to positive role modelling from staff. The group have some resources which promote positive images of other people in society and they plan some activities which introduce children to less familiar festivals such as Eid and Chinese New Year.

Children are developing an understanding of right and wrong due to consistent behaviour management, which helps them to learn about the consequences of their behaviour. They are steadily becoming familiar with the behavioural expectations within the setting which helps them to share, take turns and play in harmony. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement which values their achievements and ensures they feel good about themselves. However, their behaviour sometimes deteriorates and conflict issues occur when the size of group activities are too large. For example, during some story times and when large groups of children wish to play with the same activity.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is appropriately fostered within the setting. They develop close personal friendships which ensures they enjoy coming to playgroup as they talk about waiting for their friends to arrive. Children often share what they have been doing at home and where they have been, which encourages a link with home. Children with new siblings are encouraged to share their observations about the new arrival which helps them to understand changes in

their life.

The partnership with parents and staff is satisfactory. Parents find staff to be approachable and supportive. Parents value the interest staff take in their children's emotional and developmental needs as they feel they are leaving their children with people who know them. Parents are satisfied with the verbal and written communication they receive. An induction booklet and news letters provide information about some child care practices and events, which they are encouraged to be involved with. However, parents do not have access to all the settings written policies and procedures and the setting have not yet devised a system for recording parental complaints. Parents are provided with sufficient information about the foundation stage curriculum and they know that records of achievements are available for them to view. However, activity plans are not routinely displayed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a well established team who work well together to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievement. The setting benefits from a small but supportive management committee who are aware of their responsibilities and who play an active role in the running of the group. Children's welfare and education are promoted due to robust systems for recruitment and vetting. New staff and students follow a suitable induction programme and they are well supported by more experienced members of staff.

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

Play sessions run smoothly due to effective organisation with regard to staff's responsibilities and routines which children are very familiar with. Children are well settled and happy and they are well supported by staff as they play. However, the organisation of some routines and activities do not consistently represent the needs of both older and younger children.

The leadership and management within the setting is satisfactory. The management committee and staff demonstrate a commitment to the future development of the care and education provided. Staff show a willingness to access further training and qualification as they have all attended a full range of training since the playgroup opened. Playgroup staff are developing their confidence with regard to the delivery of the education provision due to the training and support they are receiving. Communication systems between staff and the committee promote the sharing of information and helps staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. Staff recognise the importance of effective planning and assessment and they have established some systems for monitoring and evaluating the success of the curriculum through self assessment and review processes. However, planning structures are not secure at this time.

Most aspects of documentation are kept as required. Children's welfare is promoted as all their personal records are kept and shared with regard to confidentiality. The

committee support staff in reviewing written policies and procedures to ensure they remain a true representation of practice. Documents and recording systems are well organised and present a professional and clear approach with regard to how the group operates.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report. 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 develop the use of the Birth to three matters framework to ensure the development needs of younger children are appropriately supported, ensure their progress is regularly recorded
- further develop the partnership with parents by improving their access to written policies and procedures and by devising a parental complaints record
- review the organisation of everyday routines and activities such as story time, to reflect the differentiation between children's ages, stages and abilities (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- continue to develop current planning and assessments systems to ensure a

balanced curriculum across all six areas of learning, ensure plans link consistently to the stepping stones and make effective use of assessments to plan for children's next steps in their learning.

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