



St Lawrence Church Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY218787
Inspection date	15 June 2006
Inspector	Jill Nugent

Setting Address	Hillhouse Primary School, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3EL
Telephone number	07753268689
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Registered person	St Lawrence Church 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Lawrence Church Pre School registered in 1984. It operates from a classroom in Hillhouse Primary School in Waltham Abbey. Children share access to an outdoor play area. The pre school is open each weekday from 09:05 to 11:50 during term times. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre school at any one time.

There are currently 26 children on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre school supports children who have learning disabilities and/or difficulties and also children who have English as an additional language.

The pre school employs six staff, five of whom have relevant early years qualifications. The leader is studying towards a degree in childcare and education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The pre school has adequate procedures in place to promote children's health. Staff obtain permission from parents before administering medication or using creams and plasters. They maintain the accident records appropriately and have good access to first aid equipment. Staff are also able to seek help from the main school if there are no qualified first aiders present. This means that children can always be treated without delay. Any children who have an infectious illness are excluded from pre school so as to protect others. Children benefit from staff's close attention to matters of hygiene. The tables are cleaned for snack time and staff talk with children about why they need to wash hands. These procedures contribute to keeping children healthy.

Children enjoy a healthy snack of fruit every day. They are able to choose from a wide selection of fruit and sometimes eat fruits, such as strawberries, which they have grown themselves. Children with allergies have an appropriate diet as all staff are aware of their dietary needs. Children do not always realise that snack time is happening and are often not encouraged to participate. Staff merely supervise and so children are unable to develop social skills and personal independence through an organised snack time. Children can access drinking water during the session, although this is not easy for young children as they need to be able to operate a tap. Children have good opportunities for outdoor play and particularly enjoy riding around on a set of new, wheeled vehicles. They are learning to control these, using hands and feet, and discover ways of negotiating space around obstacles. Children enjoy the physical exercise and, consequently, keep fit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are generally safe for children. Staff carry out regular risk assessments and highlight any safety issues requiring attention, for instance, the fitting of finger guards to toilet doors. The school caretaker is on hand to see to any necessary repairs. Staff have a list of checks to be carried out daily, although they have no record of these checks having been carried out. Children may be at risk if day-to-day safety issues are not highlighted. There are adequate fire precautions in place and children practise the fire drill regularly. An evacuation plan is displayed so that all adults are aware of what to do in an emergency. Children are becoming aware of

personal safety because staff remind them about safety issues, for example, using tools safely and moving outdoors in a safe manner. Overall, children keep safe while on the school premises.

Staff supervise children at the beginning and end of each session so as to ensure that they arrive and leave safely. The outdoor play area is secure and the gate is kept locked when children are playing outdoors. However, the classroom door leading in to the school has only one low handle within easy reach of children. Although children are aware that they must not open it, they may be at risk in the main school building should they leave the room. Children use the pre school's resources safely as these are checked whenever staff set them out. The resources are suitable for children of different ages and abilities. Staff extend the range available, when finances permit, so that children can have more choice. They are considering using different types of storage in an attempt to improve access to resources.

Staff have a good knowledge of Child Protection issues. They have all attended training and have the necessary information to enable them to seek advice. There is a procedure in place for logging any concerns which is easily accessible to all staff. Therefore, children are well protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children are initially curious about the activities on offer but do not sustain this interest. On arrival, many children are attracted to the drawing table, others like to play with trains or Playdoh. Children enjoy sharing books and playing imaginatively with houses and cars. Some children become very involved in their own independent play. In general children enjoy this opportunity for free choice play. However, as resources are not easily accessible children do not learn to use their own initiative. They lack the involvement of staff and tend to wander away from activities. Some make up their own games, while others wait for something interesting to happen. Children are becoming confident and talk readily with adults. They are keen to participate in organised activities, such as, cutting and sticking, and card-making. However, staff do not interact with children effectively in order to extend their learning through conversation. They have access to the 'Birth to three matters' framework but fail to make good use of it to help plan stimulating activities for young children. This results in children having little opportunity to explore, to be creative or develop their imagination. Consequently, children are not actively learning through their play experiences.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children are not making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals overall. They have good relationships with each other and are developing an ability to concentrate, for example, when colouring in pictures. However, they are not encouraged to be independent, for instance, at snack time, in the preparation and serving of food and drinks. Children are beginning to learn about the shapes and sounds of letters through the use of a phonics scheme. Older children are able to match magnetic

letters to words. They are becoming aware of writing for a purpose when asked to illustrate their 'treasure island' wishes. However, children are not developing these early literacy skills further through practising letter sounds, or learning to write letters and familiar words. They are becoming aware of numbers and help to count how many children are present each day. They are not developing mathematical skills in planned activities and free play, and show little interest in using numbers themselves. Neither are they becoming aware of mathematical language or learning how to solve problems. Children have good opportunities to learn about living things. They grow many different types of plants, including sunflowers and chives. They understand the needs of plants and enjoy harvesting and eating the produce. Children take part in art and craft activities linked to particular themes, such as 'Under the Sea' when they decorate pictures of fish for display. They have few opportunities to use their imagination and develop their own creative skills through exploring a range of materials and media. They like to sing and take part in action rhymes enthusiastically. Children are learning manipulative skills through using scissors and digging tools but have little opportunity to develop physical skills using large equipment. Overall, children are not developing, or furthering, their skills satisfactorily through the activities on offer.

Staff plan the educational programme around themes and ensure that these cover all stepping stones throughout a year. The written planning is skimpy and does not show good coverage of all learning areas, particularly mathematical and physical development. Activities are linked to the stepping stones but only listed and cannot therefore be developed into stimulating learning opportunities. There are no planned group activities to encourage children to learn together. Staff plan an individual adult-led activity each week but these are not recorded. Consequently, there are no clear learning objectives linked to these activities. Staff lack a definite focus and do not challenge children or encourage them to think. They do not explain to children what is on offer, or why they are participating in a particular activity. At times they join with children in free choice play and offer support. However, they do not always make effective use of these opportunities to engage children in conversation and extend their learning. Overall, the teaching is ineffective and results in children making less than satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. There is no system in place for assessing children's progress, as staff feel the system originally introduced is not manageable. Therefore, they are unable to make use of observations of children's progress to guide the future planning. Overall, the programme for nursery education does not meet the needs of the children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy at pre school but do not always feel included. They are made to feel welcome because they see photographs of themselves on their coat pegs and like to self-register using name cards. At group registration time, some children continue to play or wander around the room. Staff do not encourage them to be included in the group and consequently children do not benefit from any learning taking place. Young children are generally well supported during the session. They enjoy sitting on an adult lap if feeling the need for some attention. Staff talk with

children about what is happening at home. They respond to their interests, for instance, by finding a particular toy or reading a story in the book corner. However, some children play alone and without support at times. Consequently, they lack a real sense of belonging. Staff offer good support to children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties. They are able to seek advice from outside professionals and have attended training in various learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children are becoming aware of diversity in society through using resources which reflect different cultures and finding out about different festivals. Therefore, they are learning to respect others in a wider society.

Children behave well and are aware of their boundaries. They are developing negotiation skills through the helpful intervention of staff when a dispute occurs. Staff have all trained in behaviour management and make effective use of a 'kind hands' approach. Children respond to this very well and there are few incidents. Positive behaviour is encouraged, with an emphasis on talking through any issues. Therefore, children are learning to distinguish between right and wrong, and behave responsibly. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have good relationships with parents and carers. They supply detailed information about the provision in an introductory booklet and parents are kept up to date through termly newsletters. Children's registration forms request all the necessary information and permissions. Parents bring fruit for children's snacks. They include a wide variety so that children have the opportunity to taste different fruits. Some parents contribute by sitting on the committee. This is very supportive of the pre school. Overall, children benefit from this working partnership between parents and pre school.

The partnership with parents and carers, with respect to the nursery education, is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage of learning in the introductory booklet. Each newsletter includes information on the current theme. Parents are welcome to talk with staff at any time about their children's progress. Staff complete an Initial Child Profile for all new children, in collaboration with parents, and this provides a useful baseline from which to show children's progress. However, staff do not make use of the parents' notice board to display weekly plans or provide information about the weekly activities. This means that parents and carers can not easily become involved in their children's learning. The pre school leader has introduced a display of photographs showing children involved in activities. She is planning to have open evenings so that parents are better informed about the educational provision.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The pre school has in place all the necessary policies and is in the process of updating these. The attendance register is well maintained and insurance cover is kept up-to-date. All the policies are clear and in a readable format, although staff do not always implement them in practice. This leads to some weaknesses in the provision of care. In general, the paperwork is rather disorganised and documents are not always available on the premises. At times staff are unable to access plans

and records relating to the educational programme. This results in children not having appropriate learning opportunities. Overall, the documentation does not provide an effective framework for the pre school's practice.

Staff are well qualified and keen to attend training in order to improve their practice. There is a sound employment procedure in place. However, the induction procedure for new staff has not yet been finalised. The pre school leader has no system for appraising staff in order to assist their professional development, although staff have recently attended training in several areas, for example, planning and assessment, science, mathematics and dance. The leader is the only member of staff to hold a first aid qualification. As she is not on the premises every day, she has arranged first aid cover with the school until staff are able to renew their certificates. Despite having good qualifications and skills, staff do not make effective use of their time, or of the available play space. The classroom is divided into learning areas but is cramped and does not allow children easy access to resources. Some resources are piled up high and prevent children from seeing into other areas and consequently from being seen by staff. When unsure of what to do, they often congregate in an underused area by the cloakrooms. Staff do not take full advantage of the outdoor play area to extend the range of activities for children. They do not have a structured daily routine and children are often unaware of what is happening during the session. Group times are disorganised and many children feel left out. Staff waste valuable time preparing snacks themselves and clearing away afterwards. They respond to children's needs when aware of them although, as there is no overall direction, children often look after themselves. Children's care and education is adversely affected by the lack of organisation of both space and time. Overall, children's needs are not met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is inadequate. The pre school leader does not communicate effectively with staff. This results in staff being unaware of how to organise each day so that children can move forward in their learning. She fails to demonstrate active leadership during each session. Consequently, children miss out on opportunities for learning and quickly lose interest. She is aware that there are areas for improvement and has set out some targets on a development plan. She has sought advice on the planning of the educational programme and on organising a system for assessing children's progress. She meets regularly with staff to monitor the provision, although staff meetings are not used effectively to update staff or encourage their involvement in planning and assessment. Staff consequently lack motivation and are unable to work effectively as a team. Overall, the leader does not ensure the effective implementation of the nursery education programme.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection, the pre school was asked to introduce a key worker system and to keep a record of significant incidents. Staff are now allocated groups of children as part of a key worker system and all significant incidents are recorded in an incident book. At the previous nursery education inspection the pre school was asked to provide opportunities for children to develop early writing and phonics skills. Staff now provide various opportunities for children to enjoy mark-making and have introduced a phonics scheme. Children's care and education have benefited from

these improvements.

At both previous inspections the pre school was asked to introduce a system of observing children and assessing and recording, their progress. The pre school has not yet introduced an assessment system. Therefore, children are not able to benefit from staff making use of assessment records to help plan the educational programme.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- review the organisation of the daily routine so as to ensure that all children are included and able to benefit from each learning experience
- review the organisation of available space so that children have good access to a range of resources
- improve the opportunities for children under three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person

must take the following actions:

- develop the planning of the curriculum to ensure coverage of all learning areas and to include clear learning objectives
- develop a system for assessing children's progress which is linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals
- challenge and extend the more able children through effective interaction to encourage thinking and develop skills.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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