



Our Lady's PreSchool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127424
Inspection date	26 June 2006
Inspector	Claire, Alexandra Parnell / Susan Jennifer Scott
Setting Address	St Joseph's RCP School, Springhead Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9QZ
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Registered person	Father Vella, Victor Mario
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 good. 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?

Our Lady's Pre-School has been registered since 2000.

It operates from one large mobile classroom situated in the grounds of St Joseph's RC School in Northfleet. The Pre-School serves the local area.

There are currently 34 children from two and a half to five years on roll. This includes 21 funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The

setting currently supports children with special needs, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:00 until 12:00.

There are four part time staff who work with the children. Two members of the staff have an early years qualifications to NVQ level 3.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of hygiene practice through the use of explanations, demonstrations, pictorial guidance and independent and supported routine. Although children cannot visit the toilets, within the primary school, independently, they are encouraged to develop self help skills when visiting the toilets, such as flushing the toilet and washing their hands appropriately. Children have access to tissues to blow their noses and use bins effectively to dispose of tissues. Purposefully placed posters help children to understand the reason for this action.

Documentation for medication administration and accidents is used appropriately to promote children's ongoing health needs.

Children learn to make choices from healthy foods at snack time, increasing their awareness of healthy eating. A choice of healthy drinks are also available to the children, although children cannot choose when to access drinks to quench their own thirst, as they are only available at a set snack time. Appropriate information is available to staff to ensure children's dietary needs are met.

Children benefit from regular opportunities to take part in rigorous physical play, using both indoor and outdoor space, movement and relevant large and small equipment to extend and develop new and existing skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a secure and well maintained environment. Staff ensure children can access all areas of the premises safely by arranging the furniture and equipment appropriately to create space and easy access. Children benefit from having access to a varied outside area within the school grounds. This is carefully supervised to provide a secure environment for physical and exploratory play.

Children have use of appropriately sized chairs and tables to ensure they can play safely at their own level. Resources are stored at accessible levels to provide opportunities for children to select activities safely. Systems are in place to provide communication for staff to further promote children's safety. Equipment is regularly checked and removed if presenting hazards to the children.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure children and staff can be evacuated in the event of an emergency. Children learn about rules for their own and other people's safety due to the clear explanations and demonstrations made by staff.

Children's welfare is promoted and protected efficiently, due to the clear child protection procedures in place and the staff's knowledge of what to do and who to contact for support in such circumstances.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a good range of activities available to them, to cater for all levels of ability and ages. They confidently explore what is available to them and independently make choices as to what to play with. Most children are settled and content within the setting, although those who find pre-school an emotional challenge are cuddled, reassured and given extra support. Children are familiar with the session's routine due to the practical visual aids used to remind children of what is going to happen next. Some staff have a clear knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and use this effectively to promote younger children's ongoing development. However this is not consistent for all children as other staff do not have a clear understanding of the framework. Children are observed to be busy and occupied with a supporting staff team ensuring children are engaged and participating in activities and play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are progressing well due to the interesting, engaging and challenging activities and resources made available to them and the full participation of the majority of staff. The children's activities are planned thoughtfully and reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. Regular observations are made of children's achievements, although these are not always linked to stepping stones and areas of learning. Therefore staff do not always have clear knowledge of the stage of development each child is at, resulting in limited use of assessments to inform future planning.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported very effectively. The staff provide excellent information to other professionals to show their commitment to the ongoing development and support for these children. Staff ruthlessly continue to offer this support resulting in effectively meeting children's challenging needs. Children are given subtle interaction and guidance to enable their full participation and inclusion in the whole session.

Children with English as an additional language receive support throughout the session, although children may benefit from further resources reflecting their own language.

Children experience good practical opportunities to write and to practise their word recognition through enjoyable group activities. For instance, children are encouraged to write their names and to identify the words for the days of the week correctly. Children are confident speakers and enjoy opportunities to communicate. Staff provide good support in developing children's spoken language and successfully encourage them to extend this by developing their vocabulary. For example, they are encouraged to use the word 'mild' to describe weather that is neither hot or cold.

Children enjoy the practical opportunities to learn to recognise and use numbers; they have good counting skills when counting together and staff prompt their use of mathematical language effectively. They are able to complete challenging puzzles and show a sense of pride in their achievements when doing so; they all cheer when they complete the puzzles in a small group.

Children enjoy the varied activities that enable them to learn about the topic of 'growth'. They are encouraged to discuss garden centres with the adults and to build on their understanding of what happens at a garden centre by using this in their role play.

Children are developing good manipulative skills, they have varied opportunities to use tools such as pencils, scissors, various sizes of paintbrushes and are encouraged to access a variety of puzzles that require dexterity to complete.

Children confidently use a variety of materials to explore and investigate texture, shape and colour. For example, they make interesting collages with a variety of greenery and some flowers. Children express their ideas confidently during imaginative play, pretending to cook, shop and tidy up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about the positive differences in today's society through a range of resources portraying positive images of race, gender, ability and culture. Their background details, gained from the parents, is used effectively to provide for and reflect their individual needs.

Children gain self-esteem and a sense of pride from most staff, who ensure even the smallest achievement is recognised and congratulated. Due to this, children now recognise each other's achievements and share in each other's pleasure. Children learn to negotiate, take turns, share equipment and staff's time, resulting in harmonious play. However, due to some staff's inappropriate behaviour management, this can result in inconsistent practice that can undermine children's confidence.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are

enthusiastic and enjoy their play and learning because the programme offers a variety of good choices. Occasionally children's progress is limited by lack of independence. For example, they are not effectively encouraged to take some responsibility during snack-time routines, although they wash their hands and can help themselves to tissues whenever they need to.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are welcomed into the group to share in their children's play and learning experiences, therefore enhancing children's confidence. Parents have access to a good range of information about care and development issues, which is either displayed through verbal feedback or written. Therefore parents are well informed about their children's time in the setting and how they are learning. Parents have access to information about communicating concerns to either the setting or to the regulatory body.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Systems are in place to ensure children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who hold relevant checks for unsupervised access to children. Documentation is complete, available, and kept confidentially and secure, therefore promoting children's welfare further. However, children's attendance is not accurately recorded at the time of entry to the setting.

Children are confident, familiar and at ease in the staff's care. They are reassured by familiar people and a familiar routine. An effective system is in place to organise children's safe journey to and from the toilets that are not within the pre-school premises.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Children's progress and development is carefully monitored by those staff who attend ongoing training and use their new found knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and responsibilities to a high degree. However, this is not consistent throughout the setting. When supervisory staff are not in attendance, the running of the usual routine and use of developmental systems are not consistently applied, therefore impacting on children's ongoing development.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was given three recommendations regarding the care of the children. The setting now has two staff members with level three qualifications, a further staff member is currently completing her level two. A safety gate is now in place at the school kitchen door to make this area inaccessible to children when they are playing outside. The staff are deployed carefully within the setting and during outside play, to ensure children are interacted with effectively and their safety promoted. However, when more than two children require the toilet, two

members of staff leave the setting, sometimes leaving limited staff with the remaining children.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was given two key issues. The pre-school have made some progress in improving the educational programme. Children are confidently mark making and some name their own work with a sense of pride. Children have some opportunities to exercise independence, for example, by having tissues they can access, and a good choice of activities. They have limited opportunities to develop independence during snack time routines though. Children benefit from the staff's willingness to offer explanations and encourage appropriate behaviour but there are instances when their behaviour is not managed consistently, and good behaviour is not modelled effectively by all staff.

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):

- provide children with drinks throughout the session
- develop staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities particularly towards behaviour management and developmental frameworks

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):

- ensure staff are familiar with the stepping stones and curriculum, and can identify children's stage of development and use this to contribute to plans

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