



St Joseph's Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY257293
Inspection date	13 September 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Tovey
Setting Address	The School House, Priory Road, Chalfont St. Peter, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8SB
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Registered person	Enterprise
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?

St Joseph's Pre-school has been registered since 2003. The Pre-school has been located in a building within the grounds of St. Joseph's RC Combine School in Chalfont St. Peter since 1999. The building has a playroom, cloakroom and toilet facilities. There is a fully enclosed garden for outside play. The pre-school serves the local area and is owned by a sub group of St Joseph's School governors.

There are currently 57 children from two years to under five years on roll. This includes 37 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The Pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:30 and from 12:45 until 15:15.

There are eight part time staff who work with the children. Six members of staff have early years qualifications to level two or three, with two staff working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The Pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PSLA)

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn good hygiene practices as part of their daily routine. Most children are independent in their self-help skills whilst staff provide appropriate levels of support for younger children as they are developing ability to do this. Children wash their hands at appropriate times and understand the reasons for doing so. Many children put on aprons for messy play and outdoor clothes, often persevering to do this independently. There are suitable procedures in place to ensure good standards of cleanliness and to promote good hygiene throughout the pre-school and thus minimise risk to children. All staff have relevant first aid training and the children are well cared for, due to efficient procedures in place for first aid, accidents and medication, all of which are shared with the parents.

The children are served a variety of healthy snacks. They have good appetites and enjoy a variety of fruit, for example pineapple, grapes, banana and raisins. Their individual dietary needs are clearly known and followed by the childcare staff. Snack times are well organised, children sit at small tables and eat in a relaxed and social atmosphere. The staff encourage the children to engage in conversation with their peers; as a result the children are increasing their social skills. Children are developing their independence skills as they help themselves to fruit at snack time and pour their own drinks. The younger children are regularly offered drinks to ensure none remain thirsty.

Children are developing a positive attitude to exercise, which is enjoyed on a daily basis. Children show great delight and excitement when playing outside in the fresh air. They have fun running around freely in the garden, they play with their friends, football, digging and climbing, and pedalling their bikes with great confidence around the building. They have opportunities to practise their physical skills on the climbing frame, ladder and balancing apparatus, developing co-ordination when balancing, climbing and jumping. Children use a range of equipment and practical life exercises, to develop competent small motor control. They pour small quantities of water accurately, clear up any spills and use appropriate tools with the play dough and creative activities, such as painting and sticking.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the welcoming surrounding as staff greet them and their parents warmly; this ensures they feel secure and content. Space is well organised and used effectively to allow

children opportunities to be active, engage in table top and floor activities. They enjoy opportunities to relax and share books in a very comfortable environment with child size bench seating and cushions.

They have access to a wide range of good quality toys and equipment, which are appropriate for their age and development. Toys are set up, inviting and enticing children to play. These are easily accessible which encourages children to make their own choices and develop their independence as they choose and move freely between activities. All the furniture and play equipment is clean and in good condition to ensure children are not harmed.

Children receive very good levels of supervision as correct ratios are maintained at all times. They relax and play happily in an environment where staff have an excellent awareness of security. Staff are alert to potential hazards and risks are minimized. They conduct regular checks to ensure that the children can enjoy an environment and equipment that is well maintained. Children are learning to keep themselves safe too. They tuck chairs in after them so no trip hazards occur and take part in regular recorded fire drills.

Children's welfare in the pre-school is safeguarded by staff who are vetted and have a clear understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues. Implementation of effective systems, such as the collection of children and recording of visitors, formal and informal risk assessments, contribute to ensuring children's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have a fantastic time at the pre-school. Staff ensure children have well supported positive learning experiences within a stimulating environment. Children are happy and care-free and enjoy the freedom they have to learn through independent discovery and exploration. They settle very well at the pre-school where they receive very good quality care. They gain good self-esteem as staff praise their efforts and celebrate their achievements. Children enjoy the balance of activities available to them which helps them progress in all areas of development and they spend their time purposefully, for example, they paint, use their imagination as they play in the home corner and drill holes as builders, play with small world resources, dough and sit sensibly together as they listen to stories. Staff work together to plan activities which give all children opportunities to develop their skills. Planned documents show how activities are successfully linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework is being introduced this term. Children have excellent relationships with staff and each other and laugh and smile as they have fun playing and learning together. Although, many of the younger children are new this term, only a few are tearful and upset when leaving their parents. Staff are very sensitive to these children's needs offering plenty of individual attention and support during this time.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children's personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the pre-school. Children occupy themselves well and are motivated learners. They independently move from one activity to another keeping themselves constantly

engaged. They use their initiative during play, behave very well and understand right from wrong. They form good relationships with each other, play well together and show care and consideration for others. They demonstrate good independence skills as they tidy away resources, select their own choice of collage materials and pour their own drinks at snack time. The staff are developing their use of planning, to ensure that the children are presented with a variety of activities that have regard for all areas of learning and which focus on specific outcomes. The staff collate information about the children's achievements, through observations and assessments. The children's attitude to learning is positive and they play an active role in this, as they make choices from the activities offered. They concentrate well during routine activities, such as circle time, they listen carefully to instructions and attentively to stories. The children negotiate well with one another whilst waiting to do painting and riding the bikes.

Children are very confident and self-assured. They are secure in their relationships with adults and interact positively with other children. They select activities from available resources and concentrate well as they complete their chosen tasks. They are independent in their self-care skills, with most children able to put on their own outdoor clothes and aprons for painting. The children are familiar with the daily routine and follow this well. Children are confident speakers and engage easily in conversation with others as they play. They chat together whilst playing with the airport and small world people, ordering their thoughts well before speaking. They recognise their written names on their coat pegs and when they play 'find your name' game; all name cards are hidden around the room. The children enjoy exploring books, both individually and in small groups throughout the day. The book area is very comfortable and cosy with the books displayed in an inviting way. Children are captivated during story time which is brought alive by the use of puppets, and they eagerly await what happens next. The children can explore mark-making as a writing and drawing activity at the table or help themselves from the resources available. Some children can write their own names, others attempt with the support of staff on their art work. But there are missed opportunities to encourage the children to 'write' for a purpose, for example, in role play situations both inside and in the garden. Children's mathematical development is excellent. They are very confident with numbers and counting. They count ably up to 10 and over and staff reinforce children's counting skills as opportunities arise. Staff make learning fun and capture children's attention very well as they develop their number recognition skills. Children understand the sequence of numbers and have excellent opportunities to develop their awareness of calculation. They sing number rhymes and work out how many more cups are needed for all the children at snack time. They use comparative language appropriately when talking about the size of animals and identify which group was larger according to the colour of their clothes. Children recognise colours and a variety of shapes. Children have opportunities to build and construct with a range of objects and materials. The children enjoy using the computer and are able to perform simple functions, such as clicking and dragging. Children talk about their families and special events and show awareness of time. They discuss the weather and understand why they need to wear rain coats and boots to play in the rain and sun hats when sunny. They then record their observations on the weather board at circle time. Through planned activities the children are becoming aware of cultural, religious events and customs of countries of the world. They are able to explore, investigate and make discoveries, for example, they use magnifying glasses to look at insects in the garden. They are learning about how things grow, as they plant seeds, bulbs and grass. Children enthusiastically take part in physical activities and have excellent opportunities to reinforce and further progress

their skills. They demonstrate good spatial awareness when playing outside using wheeled toys, as they adjust speed, change direction and avoid collision. Children show good hand-eye coordination as they practise throwing and catching balls. They develop their fine muscle movements as they cut with scissors, manipulate play dough with their hands and use a range of small scale resources. Children enjoy joining in games where they use their imagination and act out stories. The children take part in many art and craft activities, the materials are laid out and children are encouraged to make independent choices and explore free creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children within the pre-school are valued as individuals and have excellent relationships with staff and one another. Children enjoy the genuine interest taken in them by staff. They have excellent self-esteem as a result of the praise and encouragement they receive from staff who value all children's efforts. Children show a very good understanding of the needs of others and show care and consideration to others during sessions. They share resources and are patient, for example, as they wait their turn for the fruit to be passed around at snack-time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are very happy and relaxed within the pre-school where children have positive relationships with one another. They feel good about themselves and staff sensitively support children to help them progress. Children celebrate each other's achievements and clap to applaud the efforts of other children. They develop an understanding of diversity through play with a variety of multicultural resources and planned topic work. Staff have experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and work in close partnership with parents and outside agencies to meet individual needs.

Children's behaviour is excellent; they know what is expected of them and are clear about what is right and wrong. They listen to staff and respond positively to requests. They sit quietly at circle time, line up sensibly when getting ready to go out and come in. They have an excellent understanding of the boundaries and behaviour expectations of the pre-school and share and take turns very well. They are very polite to one another, through the role models provided by the staff, who encourage the children to say "please" and "thank-you".

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and contributes significantly to children's well-being in the pre-school. Children benefit enormously from the friendly interaction between staff and parents, which is enhanced by the key worker system. Parents' views about their child's needs and interests are actively sought before the child starts at the group. Parents are kept well informed about how their child is progressing and developing through verbal exchanges, individual communication books, an open door policy and parents evening. They receive regular, detailed information about the pre-school practice and they support their child's learning, for example, by contributing resources relevant to current topic work. All policies and procedures are shared with the parents who are able to share their views about the pre-school through questionnaires and discussion with the staff. Parents are extremely positive in their praise of the pre-school and feel well informed about their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Excellent teamwork contributes to children having fun, positive, play and learning experiences at the pre-school. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work cohesively together to ensure pre-school sessions run smoothly. They are vigilant to children's needs and ensure children are well supervised and ratios met. Staff are efficient, professional and organise a stimulating environment in which children focus well on learning through well supported, purposeful play. They have a good understanding of how children learn and update their skills by regularly attending external training.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals. Practice is regularly monitored and evaluated and action plans are in place to show how the pre-school plans to further improve. Policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Most documentation to support all areas of practice are well maintained, although the complaints procedure lacks the correct contact details of the regulator. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting was asked to ensure a record is maintained of children who arrive or leave significantly late or early and all visitors to the group. The pre-school now records in the attendance register the time of anyone who arrives or leaves during the session and a signed visitors book is maintained. This means the safety of the children, staff and visitors is improved.

The staff were also asked to ensure that all policies and procedures relating to day care activities are updated to include relevant details. All policies and procedures relating to day care activities have been updated and are displayed for parents. This means that the parents are kept fully informed of policies and procedures relating to the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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

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 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):

- update complaints procedure to include the new Ofsted contact numbers.

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 extend children's opportunities to mark make in everyday activities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk