



St Andrews Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 224725 |
| Inspection date | 28 February 2007 |
| Inspector | Jacqueline Mason |
| Setting Address | Weston Road, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 6HB |
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| Registered person | St Andrews 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 Andrews Pre-School is run by a committee and opened in 1971. It operates from St Andrews Church Hall in Weston Coyney. The group serves a wide local area.

There are currently 36 children from two years to four years on roll. This includes 15 funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is open from Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 09.30 to 12.00.

There are four part-time staff working with the children of whom half have early years qualifications to Level 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective procedures are in place for sick children to ensure that the spread of infection is limited. Written parental permission has been requested to seek emergency medical advice or treatment, although parents and carers actually sign to give permission for their children to be taken off site rather than for medical consent. Consequently the permission procedure for medical advice or treatment is not clear. Hygiene procedures are good. Children are encouraged to be aware of personal hygiene and well established routines for hand washing are in place to help children learn about the importance of washing their hands before eating and after toileting.

Satisfactory arrangements are in place to encourage children to eat healthily and make healthy choices about what they eat. Children are offered fresh fruit regularly at snack time and on some days they are offered toast. Children are given a drink of water or fresh milk at snack time although fresh drinking water is only available at other times if children request a drink. Special dietary needs are met in discussion with parents and carers.

Physical development is promoted adequately. Although children do not currently have access to an outdoor play area, staff ensure that active physical play is offered each day. They provide equipment such as tunnels and a trampoline to ensure that children are able to be active.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are well protected because staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the protection of children. They are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice to safeguard children's welfare. Children are further protected because security of the premises is good. For example, a staff member stands at the entrance to the hall at the beginning of the session to ensure that children do not leave when parents do. The door is then locked until the end of the session when a member of staff will again supervise at the doorway. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that children are not able to leave with persons not nominated by parents or carers. Staff take care to ensure that the premises are safe for children to play. For example, radiators and electrical sockets are covered and a safety gate restricts access to the kitchen.

The physical environment is welcoming to parents, carers and children. The room is set up before children arrive enabling children to go straight into play activities as soon as they arrive. This, and the good support of staff, helps children to develop confidence to separate from their carer and settle quickly into the setting. Children's art work is displayed, helping children to develop a sense of belonging. Staff provide a good range of toys and furniture that are clean, safe and suitable for their purpose. Children are encouraged to be independent and choose from the toys provided each day.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Although staff have attended training for the 'Birth to three matters' framework they have not implemented it into the provision. Because of this, the individual developmental needs for children under the age of three years are not fully met. They are grouped with children receiving funded nursery education and are drawn into the foundation stage curriculum. Some activities, such as circle time, are not effective. Younger children quickly lose concentration and become restless, resulting in older children also becoming distracted. Staff use the same developmental profile forms for children under three years of age as they use for older children. Most of the headings in the forms are linked to the foundation stage. Younger children have not reached these stepping stones and therefore the forms are of little use for monitoring their progress.

Staff do plan for all areas of development and decide in advance which toys and activities will be provided each day. Children have free choice of those selected by adults. Children are settled within the provision and move confidently between activities. Adults spend much of their time working directly with children and show a good interest in what they say and do. Children have good relationships with staff and readily seek them out for support. Older children separate readily from the carers. Some younger children need support to separate from their carer. Staff are sympathetic to this and take time to cuddle children, engage them in activities and help them feel secure. A consistent routine is followed that helps children to develop a sense of belonging. They are confident in knowing what happens next, for example they know that when the tambourine is rattled they stop what they are doing and listen to the instruction from the person in charge. Activities provided are varied and interesting. Children enjoy exploring activities such as 'pretend' spiders and insects in the sand.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Children are not making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff do not have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage of learning to help them plan and deliver the curriculum effectively. Although all six areas of learning are addressed when planning activities, the area of learning is the only guide that is used. Staff do not plan for adult-led activities. Activities that are supervised by adults do not have a focus. For example, staff were not aware of the learning intention of the foot printing activity that was being supervised and reported that they would decide what they wanted children to learn from it once the activity was concluded.

Staff do not know children's starting points when they become eligible for funding because they do not carry out initial assessments. Although there is a system in place for observing and recording children's developmental progress this is not routinely implemented. As a result, it is not possible to plan the next steps in children's learning and ensure that they are making progress. There is no evidence to suggest that activities are evaluated. Staff do not record whether children found the activity challenging or too simple nor if they have adapted the activity to help less able children participate fully. Despite this, children show a good interest in the activities provided and enjoy their time at the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff have good relationships with the children and are actively engaged in their play and learning. For example, staff chatted to the children about

the rubber insects in the sand that they were looking at through a magnifying glass, encouraging them to repeat unfamiliar words.

Children are encouraged to operate independently in the environment and are confident to seek out adults for support. Children mostly play alongside others although some interaction is beginning to take place. An interest in books is developing and children enjoy looking at illustrations with adults. Some children recognise their first name when it is written and are encouraged to self-register when they arrive at the setting. However, apart from self-registration there are few opportunities for children to see their written name. A table is put out each day for children to participate in mark-making activities but opportunities are missed to promote writing for different purposes. For example, in the role play area, which is currently a shop, there are no notepads to enable children to make shopping lists. They are not encouraged to attempt to write their name on their art work. One handed tools are used well and this encourages hand to eye co-ordination. Children use rolling pins and cutters when working with playdough and enjoy activities such as 'Mr Potato Head' which requires precision in placing facial and other features. Physical skills are developing satisfactorily. Staff provide children with daily opportunities for energetic physical play and children crawl through tunnels and bounce on the trampoline confidently.

Children are helped to play imaginatively based on their own and imagined experiences. The role play area is currently a shop and staff help children to be customers and shop keepers. However, the battery does not work in the cash register and this spoils children's enjoyment of this activity as they have to keep asking to have the till opened for them. There are coins in the till that children use well. They use numbers spontaneously and with adult support suggest a price for items in the shop. Children show an interest in counting and are provided with opportunities to see number in play activities. With adult support some children are able to count up to 15. Some children can count a small number of objects, saying a number name for each item although some activities, such as asking children to predict how many items are left after one has been taken away are too advanced for them to understand. Children show an awareness of shape. They recognise, and are able to name, some basic 2D shape such as the shape of cutters in the playdough.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities issues and through this children are developing an awareness of the world around them and the diversity of it. Staff provide some activities to promote festivals and customs although sometimes activities, such as those to promote Chinese New year, are planned but not implemented. Resources to promote positive images of culture, disability and gender are in place and are currently being extended, for example, resources for the home corner have been ordered that include play food reflecting foods from different countries and kitchen play equipment such as chopsticks and woks. There are satisfactory arrangements for children with disabilities or learning difficulties to ensure that they are fully included in the life of the setting and are able to take part in all activities.

Staff manage children's behaviour well to help them learn right from wrong and play harmoniously together. The younger children in the setting find it difficult to share and staff

successfully encourage them to take turns, share resources, and respect the needs of others. Children's individual efforts are valued and praised. Staff verbally praise good behaviour and reinforce this at the end of the session by giving out stickers as rewards. Strategies to manage unwanted behaviour are appropriate to the age and level of understanding of the children.

Staff recognise the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers. They have good relationships with them that are trusting and friendly. Information is shared to keep parents and carers informed about the provision. In addition, advice leaflets supporting parenting skills are provided to help parents and carers manage child rearing aspects such as potty training. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the setting and there is a duty rota in place. This involves helping out in a session and all parents and carers are expected to take their turn. There is a committee comprising parents and carers that takes responsibility for fund raising and the organisational aspects of the setting.

Partnerships with parents and carers of children receiving nursery education are satisfactory. Parents and carers receive regular newsletters informing them of the topic that is being covered during the term. Although there are no arrangements in place to keep them informed of their children's developmental progress, parents and carers are expected to take a turn on the parent rota and during their session they are able to talk to staff about their child. Staff have a sufficient knowledge of the children's stages of development to enable them to talk knowledgeably with parents and carers. Some staff are currently developing systems to encourage parents and carers to be actively involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Written records for children are stored securely although staff records are not always readily available for inspection. The setting is run by a committee but a list of committee members is not readily available. Although staff know the name of the chairperson of the committee they are not aware of other significant members, such as the secretary or treasurer. The committee have not undergone suitability checks. The committee takes responsibility for recruitment but the recruitment and selection procedures are not effective to ensure that staff are suitable. Although contractual information is kept, not all staff records contain proof of suitability checks, qualifications or references. Information held about staff is not stored securely. Training profiles are not maintained so it is not possible to ensure that an adequate amount of staff have first aid qualifications or that on-going professional development is promoted. Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children to adult ratios are maintained and registration systems are effective to enable staff to know which children and staff are in the building at any time. A record of visitors is maintained. Children are cared for by a consistent core staff who know them well. In addition, parents and carers help out on a compulsory rota system. Staff time is used well and they spend most of their time working directly with the children.

Leadership and management of the setting is inadequate. There are some systems in place for staff appraisal but these are not effective to promote professional development or to identify and monitor the strengths and weaknesses of staff and the setting. There are clear organisational

flaws as the committee are not aware of their roles and registration responsibilities. Staff hold regular meetings to discuss activity planning and committee meetings are also held. There are no systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of the nursery education, although staff do work with the Early Years Advisor who guides and helps them in developing the quality of its early education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was required to put in place documentation to record the procedures that would be followed in the event of a child being lost and to seek parental permission to obtain emergency medical advice or treatment. In addition, the setting was required to ensure the supervisor was qualified to Level 3, develop staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and improve the assessment of children to ensure that they are making progress.

Since the inspection the supervisor has left and the setting have recruited a suitably qualified person to take charge of the day to day running of it. Procedures have been developed and recorded to ensure that all staff are aware of what they should do if a child becomes lost. Although attempts have been made to obtain written parental permission for emergency advice or treatment, the wording of the consent forms is not clear to ensure that parents are fully aware of the permission they are giving. Staff have improved their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. A clear procedure has been formalised into a policy for the steps that would be taken if an allegation of abuse was made against a member of staff to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded. The arrangements to observe and record what children can do to help plan the next steps in their play and learning has not been developed. This remains an action at this inspection.

NURSERY EDUCATION

At the last inspection of the nursery education the setting were required to organise the daily routine to make effective use of space, resources and staff, ensure that staff are aware of the learning intentions of activities, develop staff's skills in challenging children's thinking and to improve behaviour management strategies.

Space is now used well. The room is laid out to allow for a variety of play experiences and children are able to take part in activities to promote all areas of learning. However, staff do not have an awareness of the learning intention of activities that they are supervising and do not question children to challenge their thinking. Children's development is not adequately monitored or recorded to ensure that they are making progress along the stepping stones. Behaviour management strategies have been improved and are appropriate to the children's level of understanding.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 2 - Organisation, National Standard 7 - Health, National Standard 11 - Behaviour Management and National Standard 12 - Working in Partnership with Parents. The complainant alleged that

a child's nappy had not been changed in line with the nappy changing policy. The complainant was also concerned about poor behaviour management techniques, staff not responding to concerns raised and poor communication between staff which affected the care of the children.

In order to investigate the concerns, a Childcare Inspector conducted an unannounced visit to the premises. During the visit, the Inspector made observations, reviewed policies & procedures and interviewed staff. Observations indicated that staff used appropriate methods to manage children's behaviour and children were familiar with process and routine. Nappy changing was discussed with the person in charge and as a result amendments have been made to the written policy and it has been recommended by Ofsted that further thought be given to how this information is communicated to parents. During the visit, it was found that Ofsted had not been notified of changes to staff members and the committee. In addition, the Inspector was concerned that an appropriately qualified manager may not be in place from July 2005. To address these concerns, two actions were set for the Registered Person to respond to within set timescales. The responses were reviewed by a Team Manager and found to be satisfactory. Strategies have been developed to improve morale and communication and a new person in charge is now in place. The provision met the National Standards and remained qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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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:

- ensure that all records relating to staff are complete and available for inspection
- ensure that committee members are made known to Ofsted, have undergone suitability checks, and a record of members is maintained on site
- improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations and the roles and responsibilities of the registered person (the committee).

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:

- put in place an action plan detailing how staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning will be developed to help them deliver an effective nursery education curriculum
- develop activity planning to include the learning intention of adult-supervised activities and how activities will be adapted to meet all children's needs
- develop the observation and assessment of children to ensure that children's developmental progress is sufficiently monitored and used to plan the next steps in their learning.

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 *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