

St Lawrence Church Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY218787
Inspection date	22 March 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Hillhouse Primary School, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey, Essex, EN9 3EL
Telephone number	07753268689
E-mail	
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 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 Lawrence Church Pre School registered in 2002. It operates from a classroom in Hillhouse Primary School in Waltham Abbey. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The pre school is open from 09.05 until 12.00 every weekday during term time.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre school at any one time. Currently there are 21 children on roll, of whom, 11 are funded for nursery education. The pre school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

A total of five staff work directly with the children and all of these hold relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because the pre school has good medical procedures in place. All the necessary permissions are requested and medical records are maintained appropriately. Children are protected from infection because parents are given clear information about the exclusion periods for children with infectious illnesses. Children are well taken care of in the event of an accident as there are sufficient staff on site who are qualified in first aid. Staff are attentive to matters of hygiene and ensure that children are cared for in clean surroundings. Children know to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before snack time. They have an increasing awareness of good hygiene practices, for example, helping to wipe down the table before snack. They have good access to tissues and use them independently. Overall, the pre school's procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children enjoy a variety of healthy fruits for snack. They are offered a wide choice, including bananas, apples, strawberries and oranges. Children are learning to be independent as they help to cut up fruit and clear away afterwards. Staff take the opportunity to teach children social skills and raise their awareness of healthy eating. Children have a choice of drinks and can access drinking water throughout the session. Therefore, they are well nourished. Staff take into account any special dietary needs, such as, food allergies, so that children eat an appropriate diet.

Children enjoy good opportunities for regular physical activity. They play outdoors every day, regardless of the weather, and in this way can enjoy the benefits of fresh air. They like playing with a variety of equipment, including hoops, balls and bikes. They have fun exploring, for example, rolling hoops and jumping in and out of them. Staff help children to develop their physical skills by interacting to support and extend, for instance, demonstrating how to use hoops in different ways. Therefore, children gain confidence in themselves. These opportunities for physical exercise help to keep children fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. The classroom has good natural light and is decorated with various displays of children's work. Children have adequate space to play and good access to a large play area outdoors. Their safety and security is promoted very well. All staff are aware of safety issues and supervise children closely. Any potential risks are minimised as staff carry out annual risk assessments and daily safety checks. There are good fire precautions in place. Children practise an evacuation plan so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency. Children keep secure on the premises as the main door and outside gate are secured appropriately and the inner door has been fitted with an extra handle. Staff ensure that children arrive and leave safely each day. Therefore, children keep safe at all times.

Children use a range of suitable, and safe, resources. These are stored neatly so as to be readily available to staff, with some at low level for children to access independently. The resources are all of good quality and are checked regularly for safety. Children are developing a good awareness of personal safety. Staff keep a close eye on children and remind them how to keep themselves safe if necessary. For example, they remind children to sit carefully, to take care

when carrying away plates and cups, or using plastic knives. In this way children learn to keep themselves safe in different situations.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. There is a recording system in place for the logging of any concerns. All the necessary information is available to enable staff to seek advice. They ensure that children only leave the setting with a known adult. Consequently, children are well protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well settled and happy at pre school. They show interest in the resources set out for when they arrive, for example, toy vehicles, police hats and play dough. They like to share books in the comfortable book corner or make 'notes' on clipboards as they pretend to be policemen and women. Children benefit from the involvement of adults who join them in their play. They are gaining confidence, and independence, through taking part in different activities. For instance, they have fun exploring paints with their hands, making patterns. At story time, they like to choose songs and join in with the actions enthusiastically. Children enjoy much praise from staff, for instance, when showing items they have brought in for the 'letter' table. This helps to boost their self esteem.

Children are involved in various activities which support their development and learning. Staff include aspects of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their planning. This helps them to provide various opportunities for children to be imaginative and creative. They encourage children to develop their communication skills through involving them in discussion, for example, about birthday parties. Children have some good opportunities to explore resources, such as, mark-making, magnets and construction equipment. However, they are sometimes limited in their choice of activities and this has an impact on their learning opportunities. They are curious when different resources are brought out after snack time, for instance, shape boards. They become very involved in hammering in shapes to make patterns. Overall, children are developing skills, although lack a wide range of play opportunities.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are learning to concentrate and persevere well at some tasks. They are developing their language skills in conversation, for example, when asked to describe objects brought in to show. They learn new vocabulary as they partake in cooking activities, talking about the ingredients. They have good opportunities to use mark-making tools in different situations, thereby developing an awareness of early writing. They are learning to recognise their names and enjoy listening to stories, joining in with familiar phrases. Children enjoy counting and are learning to recognise numerals. They talk about different shapes and sizes, for example, when making models and patterns, or comparing coloured bears. However, they lack opportunities to extend their early reading, writing and mathematical skills in planned activities.

Children learn about living things in activities that involve growing plants from seed. They discuss the attributes of different materials as they use them creatively. They enjoy exploring paint and collage materials or making mixes, such as 'gloop'. They are becoming aware of simple scientific concepts, for example, finding out about toys that push and pull. Children show good manipulative skills as they dig in sand and hammer nails. In physical activities, they develop their control and co-ordination as they balance and travel in different ways. When using large

equipment, such as bikes, children are helped to extend their skills through the encouragement of staff. Children particularly enjoy imaginative play, and respond with enthusiasm to suggestions for role play. They are able to develop ideas with staff who take on roles themselves. Overall, children are developing appropriate skills in these areas.

Staff plan activities around themes, making good use of the stepping stones of learning in order to include all areas. The written plans show clear learning intentions and details of each activity. However, the daily plans are complicated as they cover both free choice play and adult led activities during each session. They do not show clearly a balance of learning opportunities, particularly in the areas of language, literacy and mathematics. Staff interact effectively to promote learning when working with individual children, for example, increasing children's awareness of letters of the alphabet. They explain the activities clearly to children so that they understand what to do. They offer good support to children taking part in role play and question children to encourage them to think. Staff do not always take opportunities to reinforce children's learning in group situations to ensure that all children are developing relevant skills. When working with children, they make observations on children's progress and collect these into useful record books. Assessment sheets have been introduced so that staff can collate the information gleaned from observations. They will then be able to use the information more effectively in guiding future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel valued and included. Staff have a caring attitude and ensure that children are happy in the setting. Children are well supported and their individual needs met effectively. They show a sense of belonging and benefit from the opportunity to come together as a group at the beginning of each session. They are all invited to take part in organised activities so that none feel left out. There are good opportunities for children to learn about diversity, for example, they use different coloured paper to make self portraits. They participate in activities planned around cultural and religious festivals, such as, Chinese New Year, when they make cards and lanterns. In this way children learn to respect others in society.

Children learn to make decisions through being offered choices in creative activities and at snack time. They are developing personal independence and becoming aware of other's needs. For example, they tidy away after snack and put on their own shoes after physical activity in the hall. Children with learning difficulties are well supported by staff. There are good links with other professionals and targets are set for children using individual education plans. Children's behaviour is generally good. They are aware of their boundaries and respond positively to instructions from staff. They have good relationships with each other and play together well, sharing and taking turns. At times, however, children lose interest in the activities on offer and tend to wander, or play less purposefully. Staff redirect children when necessary and this helps them to become aware of how to behave appropriately. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The pre school works closely with parents and carers. Parents complete a child profile when children start at pre school. This helps staff to be aware of what their children like to do and their levels of skill. It provides a good starting point in providing appropriate care. There is a good settling in procedure in place and regular weekly newsletters keep parents up to date with events. The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is satisfactory. The pre school handbook includes an outline of the Foundation Stage of learning. Parents receive information about the current theme, and letter of the week, in the weekly newsletter.

Staff also make good use of link books to keep parents informed on a weekly basis and offer them the opportunity to write about what their children have been doing at home. This encourages parents to become more involved in their children's learning. Parents can talk with staff at any time if having any concerns about their children's care or education. Children benefit from this close working partnership.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre school's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All the necessary policies are in place and are in the process of being updated. Parents complete registration forms, including various consents, and these are kept in a secure place for reasons of confidentiality. The attendance records for children and staff are maintained appropriately. All the written planning is readily available on file so that staff are aware of their responsibilities in each session. Overall, the documentation provides a good framework for children's care and education.

Staff do not always make good use of their time during sessions to engage children in a wide range of interesting activities. The daily routine does not allow for many structured group times so that children can consolidate their learning. The layout of resources in the classroom has been improved but does not provide a good choice for children at an accessible level. Therefore, some children become bored after trying out what is on offer. This ineffective organisation results in a lack of stimulation for children and a limited range of learning experiences.

Staff are committed to continually improving their practice through training. There are sound employment and induction procedures in place and staff have regular appraisals in order to monitor their training needs. Since the previous inspection, members of staff have attended training in various areas, including the Foundation Stage curriculum, 'Birth to three matters' framework, and observation and assessment. Children benefit from their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The pre school is involved in a change of leadership at present. The previous supervisor worked to improve staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage and developing the systems for planning and assessment. She encouraged staff to be involved in planning activities and monitored the provision closely in order to assess which areas needed further development. The primary school has now become very involved with the pre school and is actively supporting staff in order to develop a more integrated approach and improve the overall provision of nursery education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, the pre school received six actions. Staff were asked to improve the planning and assessment systems for nursery education and to challenge the more able children effectively. Staff were also asked to improve opportunities for children under three, and review the organisation of the daily routine and available space.

The planning of the educational programme has been developed so that it now involves all staff and includes learning objectives for each activity. There is a system in place for recording observations of children and this is to be developed into records of progress. Staff have explored ways of challenging individual children and now interact more effectively in order to extend their learning.

All staff have attended training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this has helped them to improve the provision for children under three. They have reorganised the daily routine and provided more play space by changing the layout of the room. This has resulted in improved outcomes for all children, although there are still some inefficiencies in this area.

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

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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 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):

- review the organisation of the day so that children benefit from a wide variety of learning experiences
- continually review the use of available space so that children can access a good selection of resources and activities.

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):

- review the planning of the educational programme in order to ensure coverage of all learning areas, in particular, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development
- continue to develop the system of assessment in order to show clear records of children's progress in each learning area.

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