



St Matthias Church Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 139479 |
| Inspection date | 05 December 2006 |
| Inspector | Janet Butlin |
| Setting Address | Babbacombe Road, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 1HW |
| Telephone number | (01803) 214175 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | St Matthias Church Pre-School |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day 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?

Established in 1997, St Matthias Pre-school is set in the heart of Torquay in Devon, and is managed by a committee made up of representatives from the church and local schools. The pre-school follows a Christian ethos. Parental representation on the committee is welcomed. The setting is open from 09.00 until 11.45 every morning and children may stay until 12.45 to have lunch. Full days are offered until 15.30 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in term time. The group is registered to provide care for up to 20 children aged from three to four years of age. At present there are 21 children enrolled, 18 of whom are in receipt of funding. Children attend mostly from the nearby surrounding area and most go on to attend one of the two nearby schools. The group supports children who have English as an additional language and children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are many groups who use the rooms in the church complex but during a session the group has the sole use of The Pine Room. They have the use of secure outside play space and other associated facilities within the church

premises. There are four members of staff who support the provision, two of whom have appropriate childcare qualifications at NVQ levels two and three. The group receives the support of the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are well protected in the event of an emergency as staff are appropriately qualified in first aid. All necessary consents and systems are in place for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment and any accidents or incidents are rigorously recorded. Children play in a clean and hygienic environment. They are protected from cross infection as they follow thorough hand washing procedures, using liquid soap and paper towels. Children are protected from catching other children's germs as those who are sick or infectious are requested not to attend, this is reinforced by a poster on the door reminding parents of the importance of this element of health care.

Children remain well hydrated as they take frequent drinks of water from an easily accessible table. They enjoy healthy snacks brought from home. They benefit from the group's strong emphasis on healthy eating and the way parents are encouraged to send healthy snacks of fruit. They eat packed lunches which have been kept wholesome by prompt and conscientious refrigeration. Children's awareness of healthy eating is reinforced by activities and themes exploring the food groups and their nutritional value. They have created a large collage evidencing their understanding.

Children develop their large muscles effectively, and develop their climbing and balancing skills, by using appropriately challenging climbing apparatus regularly. They show a good awareness of space as they run about beneath the group's parachute. They also enjoy the health giving properties of fresh air as they play outside every day and also go on walks and outings to nearby places of interest.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a well organised and spacious environment. They move around the setting safely and access their toys and playthings easily, from a selection that has been provided for them. They have access to all necessary facilities to support good care. They play in a secure, outside play space which has a safety surface to protect them from bumps. All toys are clean, sound and in very good condition.

Children are kept safe by continued staff vigilance. However, there are periods in the day when access to the premises requires extra monitoring. A system of well maintained alarms underpins the group's security systems and helps to keep children safe and secure. An accurate register of attendance of children and staff is maintained. This shows that the group is working safely within its registration. Children's safety is enhanced as they are all confident in the use of the evacuation procedure. This is helpfully recorded to inform future practice.

Children's safety is supported by staff's good understanding of the Child protection procedure. Staff have undertaken training in this area and are secure in the referral procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in pre-school. They are cared for by sensitive, enthusiastic and responsive staff. They enter the setting eagerly and settle swiftly into the familiar routine. Staff know all the children very well and have a secure knowledge of their individual needs and interests. All children enjoy a day filled with interesting and stimulating activities. Children who stay all day have opportunities to rest if they are tired or to sit quietly in a comfortable space with a book or favourite toy.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. They are supported in their progress by staff who have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children have excellent dispositions and attitudes to learning. They are eager to discover what the day holds for them and to explore the activities. Staff support them well in their learning and help them to make choices, for example; explaining what activities are set out and discussing what they might like to do first. Good use is made of time and the sessions move along at a satisfying pace. Children are always engaged and those who stay all day benefit from different activities in the afternoon, this sustains their interest and enjoyment. Children's assessments show that they each have appropriate targets for the next steps in their learning. Plans show that a broad and balanced curriculum is offered and a good range of very worthwhile activities are provided to cover all areas of learning. Some of the activities merit their own plans which have helpful detail regarding specific learning intentions and the resources required. However, the implementation of this day to day planning lacks focus on how the activities will support individual children and help them to progress.

Children enjoy sharing their news at registration time and listening to whole group story times. They eagerly volunteer the last word at the end of a rhyming line. Good emphasis is given to the sounds that letters make, however, this is not always reinforced with examples of what the letter looks like. Children are willing and keen to attempt to write their names but their willingness to write all the letters of their name is thwarted by a lack of example to copy. Children develop their mathematical understanding as staff encourage them to count and order small objects such as plastic teddies. They observe repeating patterns as they print and paint, and think about size, shape and position as they complete puzzles. Children learn about their environment as they go on trips and outings and also have visits from members of the local community. They are skilled in the use of the group's computer. They are tuneful singers and listen carefully to visiting musicians. They enjoy the process of being creative, applying as much paint as they wish to their paper. They also become engrossed in imaginative role-play. Children develop their small muscles effectively as they master the use of scissors, paint brushes and connect construction blocks. All children enjoy and achieve well in the pre-school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle quickly as they greet their friends and choose their activities. They are confident to speak up in a group, as well as to put on a puppet theatre production for the enjoyment of their friends and staff. They show care and concern for one another, for example; helping each other in and out of dressing up clothes. They concentrate for substantial periods of time at their chosen activities. For example; persevering at jigsaws and mastering control of the computer mouse. They show delight and laugh with enjoyment, for example; when opening the door of the advent calendar and when adorning the group's Christmas tree. Children learn about cultural diversity in meaningful ways. They respect the various cultures and faiths that they encounter and develop a positive sense of self as a result. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's individual needs are known and respected. Those who have specific needs receive good support. The group has a co-ordinator for this area of care and a good working relationship with local advisers.

Children are extremely well behaved. They follow agreed codes of behaviour and the group's 'rules' are displayed on the wall. Children say please and thank you, for example; at snack time and when being passed a piece of fruit. They respond well to staff's realistic and frequent praise and willingly help to tidy away the toys before lunch. Children are sociable and well disposed towards staff and each other.

The partnership with parents is good. Children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes. They benefit from the daily informal discussions that take place. This helps parents and staff to share information regarding children's individual needs and the progress they are making. There are good systems in place to keep parents informed about regulatory procedures as well as how their child is progressing through the Foundation Stage. The planned activities are clearly displayed and parents have regular opportunities to view their child's work and assessment folders. This communication is enhanced by regular parents evenings and open days, when more detailed, focussed, discussion can take place. The group welcome parental involvement and this supports their ability to be part of their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised setting by staff who are conscientious and enjoy their work with children. They enjoy a range of worthwhile activities and play with good quality toys and resources that help them to develop in all areas. Children's individual needs are carefully considered and all are well cared for. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All staff working with children are suitable to do so and are appropriately qualified. However, there is not, at present, a suitable contingency arrangement to provide appropriately qualified cover in the event of the supervisor being unable to attend. All regulatory documentation is in place and records are securely stored. Helpful information is prominently displayed.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The quality of the provision is effectively monitored and the group receives constant support, advice and guidance from the

adjacent school and local professional advisers. Secure systems are in place to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is offered and that observations and assessments are in place. Ensuring that assessments are used effectively to support progress in day to day sessions is an area for development. Staff benefit from regular meetings with management and are supported in their professional development. This enhances the experiences of the children in their care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were required to review the implementation of Health and Safety procedures including the effectiveness of the door mat alarm, records kept, and checks of the contents of the First Aid box. The group have instituted a check list to address such issues. This has had a positive effect on safety, for example, all audible alarms are now working well. They were also required to introduce a staff development and review system, including training in special needs and First Aid. Staff have now attended training and a co-ordinator for special needs has been appointed. The group have also improved the way they record the attendance of people present. They were requested to plan activities to promote children's progress and development. The planning of activities has improved and this has enhanced children's experiences.

Nursery Education

At the previous nursery education inspection the group were required to ensure there is a named and trained co-ordinator for special needs within the setting and that all staff are familiar with the Code of Practice. This has been totally addressed. They were also requested to improve the use of time and the organisation of activities to ensure that children are all adequately supported and their behaviour well managed. Children's behaviour is good, and the timing of the session supports their total engagement with worthwhile activities. Finally the group were required to ensure that sufficient emphasis is given to planning, evaluation and assessment and to use assessments to plan for children's individual progression and share this information with parents. All these issues have been addressed. Developing the use of assessments in practice remains an area for development.

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.

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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):

- develop risk assessments to give increased attention to security of the premises at all times
- develop contingency arrangements to show how there will be an appropriately qualified, named deputy to take charge in the absence of the manager.

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):

- develop and improve the ways in which the implementation of the planning supports individual children's progress towards the next steps in their learning
- improve children's opportunities to extend their handwriting skills by, for example, enabling them to engage more frequently with examples of their names.

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