



St Mary's Pre-school Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509799
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Inspector	Susan Linda Capon
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Registered person	St Mary's Pre-school Playgroup
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. Mary's Pre-school was registered in 1993. The group is managed by a committee of local church members. The pre-school operates from the St Mary's Church Old School Hall. They access three large halls with an interconnecting foyer area and have access to two kitchens and associated toilets. There is a secure outdoor play area to the rear. The pre-school serves the local community and children attend for a variety of sessions.

The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday during term-time only. It operates between 09.00 and 12.00 each day and from 12.30 until 15.00 hours on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

A maximum of 48 children may attend at any time. There are currently 80 children from two and a half to five years on roll. Of these, 62 receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with English as an additional language and special educational needs.

The group employs 10 staff including the day to day manager. Of these, eight hold a recognised childcare qualification equivalent to NVQ level 2 and/or level 3. The group receives support from the local Early Years team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children throughout the pre-school are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and free from infection. They follow good hygiene routines throughout the session. For example, children use a tissue to blow their nose and wash their hands using liquid soap before eating their snack.

Children are free from infection and cross-contamination through the good hygiene routines followed by all the staff. They use different coloured cloths for cleaning and always wash their hands before preparing food.

Children receive appropriate treatment when they have an accident. All the staff hold a first aid qualification and use disposable gloves to manage bodily fluids. This protects the children from infection. There are several well-stocked first aid kits on site, ensuring children receive immediate treatment wherever they are in the building. All accidents are well recorded and shared with parents.

Children receive appropriate treatment when they require any medication. Staff follow the good procedures and share the records with the parent.

Staff follow the good sickness procedures and contact children's parents when a child becomes unwell at the group. They monitor the child and make them comfortable until the parent collects the child. All parents are aware they should not send their child to pre-school when they unwell. This helps the group to prevent the spread of infection.

All the children enjoy physical play every day. They play outdoors in the garden when the weather permits, developing their pedalling, running and jumping skills as they play on the equipment provided. Indoors they access the large climbing frame and balancing equipment on a regular basis. The children are developing an awareness of how their body works, as they take a rest after physical play and use the toilet independently.

The children are developing their understanding of healthy eating through the planned topics and discussions. Older children are aware that drinking milk will help them to develop strong bones and teeth. Other children know fresh fruit will help to keep them healthy. They know this needs washing before eating it.

All the children enjoy healthy snacks including fresh fruit and a plain biscuit. Milk and water are available at snack-time. Staff do not provide squash as they know this is not good for the children's teeth and gums. The children do not have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session.

The children sit together in small groups for snack-time enjoying the social occasion. "Special helpers" are chosen each day that assist with handing out the beakers and the food. Children develop their independence skills as they pour their own drinks and clear away their beaker when they have finished. All the children use good manners as they say "please" and "thank you" appropriately. Children receive appropriate food in accordance with their parent's wishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children spend their time in a very bright, clean, warm and welcoming building. Staff work hard to make the premises their own each day. They set out the daily activities and display the children's work around the rooms.

Children are safe and secure in the setting as staff ensure all areas of the premises are made safe prior to the children's arrival. For example, they check all sockets are covered and the toys provided are clean and safe. The children move around freely exploring their environment.

The premises are well-organised and offer several areas for playing for all the children. All the children access a wide range of toys, equipment and activities on a daily basis, keeping them fully occupied throughout the session. They access suitable areas for playing, eating and resting during the session. Children feeling tired can use the large soft cushions in the book corner, to take a rest or a nap in comfort.

Children are unable to leave the premises unnoticed as staff are vigilant at arrival and departure times and lock the doors during the session. Visitors arriving during the session are required to ring the door bell. They sign the visitor's book and staff accompany them around the premises, keeping the children safe and secure at all times.

The children are developing an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know they must line up at the door and wait for an adult to escort them to the garden for outdoor play.

Staff regularly review the risk assessment plans to ensure the children are safe and secure at all times. When purchasing new equipment, safety is always considered.

Children enjoy local outings to the library and recently visited the church to attend the Harvest Festival celebrations. To ensure the children's safety is paramount parents and committee members assist, keeping the children safe when crossing the busy road.

The staff and children are fully conversant with the fire drill procedures as they practise them on a regular basis. Children know they must listen and follow instructions from the staff carefully and get out of the building quickly and quietly. Staff are fully aware of their individual role and responsibilities, ensuring they put the children's safety first.

The staffs' sound knowledge and understanding of how to manage child protection issues appropriately helps to protect the children at all times. Local procedures are readily accessible and all staff are aware of their individual responsibilities for this area of care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All the children are happy, settled and enjoy their time at the group. They settle quickly on arrival, making their own choice of activity from the large range readily available.

The children benefit from the staffs' knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. They all have a good understanding of child development. Staff working with the older children understand the early learning goals and recognise the stepping stones children use to achieve these.

The children interact well with one another and the staff team, as they develop good communication and listening skills. Staff group the children appropriately throughout the session, ensuring they all receive good care and attention at all times.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are interested and keen to explore the wide range of activities readily available to them each day.

Staff planning ensures all the early learning goals are equally included in the wide range of activities provided each term. They make excellent use of the large amount of resources available to them, rotating them to provide a stimulating environment at all times.

Children access a good balance of adult-led and free-choice activities at every session. They are able to extend their creativity through the staff's awareness of ensuring they do not over direct the children during art and craft activities. For example, children mixed the coloured glue together to make their firework picture. A good range of "messy" activities are available at each session. Children confidently paint at the easel and at the table, exploring the colours as they mix them together. They know the block of paint needs water adding and discuss the difference when it is wet.

All the children enjoy listening to stories and particularly enjoyed "The Grufallo" story as the adult portrayed the story well, using different voices for the characters. The children enjoyed predicting what would happen next as they sat spellbound. Children also enjoy looking at books on their own, choosing their favourites as they retell the story in their own words. For example, 'The Ugly Duckling'.

Children are readily mark making and many can write their own names, using distinguishable letters. They are linking letters to sounds as they discuss the weather and days of the week. For example, 'W' is for Wednesday and winter. Most children can recognise their name as opportunities are included throughout the session. For example, on arrival, at snack-time and during registration.

Children are learning to count and recognise numbers. Many can count to 10 and above and some are developing a good understanding of more or less. All the older children recognise numbers from one to nine and can match cards of the same number. They recognise many shapes including circles, triangles and stars. Many are able to differentiate between the different

sizes of stars, recognising big, medium and small. The children enjoy recreating patterns as they draw and when they sing the weather song. For example, they can clap rhythmically to the words.

The children are learning about the world about them as they visit the local church and library. Visitors to the group include firemen, a musician and reptile owner. The children particularly enjoyed touching and feeling the snake. They enjoy helping to look after the group's stick insects, particularly when their tank needs cleaning out.

The children enjoy constructing their own models from a wide range of materials readily available including junk, Duplo, stickle bricks and wooden bricks. They use the computers competently and can use the programme cards correctly.

The children enjoy sharing their news with the adults and children during the morning. Many are going to bonfire parties and others are looking forward to their birthday. Staff encourage the children to think of other events which are due to take place. For example, Christmas and Diwali.

The children enjoy physical play on a daily basis both indoors and outdoors. They all move confidently around the premises and have good spatial awareness as they avoid bumping into one another as they play Power Rangers. They enjoy using the large apparatus. Children are developing their pedalling and bouncing abilities as they play with the bikes and space hoppers. They are developing their fine motors skills as they competently use pencils, paint brushes and scissors.

The children are developing their creative skills as they paint, draw, play with the sand, role play in the home corner and dance to music. They happily discuss their feelings as they explore the dough and glue. For example, they talk about it being "squidgy". They discuss their individual likes and dislikes when they taste new foods. For example, noodles.

The children benefit from the staff and parents working well together as they share information about their child. Staff identify each child's abilities prior to starting at the group, enabling the key worker to build on their learning to help them develop and progress.

The well-organised curriculum is topic based and focus activities are included on a daily basis. Staff partially evaluate activities. These plans and evaluations would benefit from some improvements to make them more effective. The main curriculum plans do not always show how more or less able children will be included.

Staff make regular observations about the children and chart their development in line with the stepping stones. Parents see the well-written report each term. They can see their child's work at any time and discuss their progress and development with the key worker. The children are well supported in their overall development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff greet the parents and children by name making them feel welcome and part of the group. They treat the children as individuals and fully value and respect their families.

Each child has their own key worker providing good opportunities for them to develop good relationships with staff. This reinforces the child's sense of belonging and security within the group.

Children attending the group come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, extending opportunities for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of other people and different cultures. Access to a good range of positive images through the resources and posters used in the setting, provide children with regular opportunities to extend their understanding of the world about them. The staff team reinforce this learning through topic based activities including discussion about festivals important to different cultures. For example, Chinese New Year and Diwali.

The children have regular opportunities to develop their independence skills throughout the session. For example, they put on their own clothes for outdoor play and select their own activities from the range available.

This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

All the staff provide excellent support to individual children with special needs, developing their own knowledge and understanding in this area. For example, all the staff have attended autism training. The SENCO co-ordinator in the group has a good understanding of her role in aiding children with special needs, helping them to reach their potential. For example, she writes individual education programmes tailored to a child's needs.

Staff support children with English as an additional language well. Signs and pictures around the room help children independently let the staff know what they need. Staff learn simple words from the child's own language to help the child feel more confident and settled in their surroundings. Dual language books are freely available in the group.

All the children are confident in their surroundings. They have all developed a good relationship with the staff, making them feel safe and secure in the setting.

New children settle quickly through the good procedures in place. Parents provide staff with detailed information, including individual likes and dislikes and any favourite toys. Children visit the group with their parents prior to starting, helping them adjust to the new surroundings more quickly.

Minimal behaviour management is required during the session as the children are busy and occupied at all times. Staff encourage the children to behave well through positive behaviour management, as they regularly praise and encourage the children's efforts and achievements. The children enjoy being the "special helper" during the day and receive a sticker in reward. They proudly wear this for the rest of the session. This helps the children to develop confidence

and good self-esteem. Older children are developing an awareness of the importance of being friendly and caring to one another. They are learning about the consequence of their actions and are encouraged to apologise if they have hurt or upset someone.

The partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the good relationships staff build with the parents. Parents find the staff friendly, approachable, helpful and supportive towards them and their children. They feel able to raise any concerns they may have, knowing things will be taken seriously and managed appropriately.

Parents receive regular information about the group and the activities taking place. For example, newsletters keep them informed of the curriculum and topics for the next term.

Parents provide staff with detailed information about their child, enabling each child to receive appropriate care and attention at all times. Staff share information about the child's day and any records requiring the parent's attention. For example, accident records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good.

The children are safe and well cared for at all times. The consistent, organised staff team work well together, providing a caring environment for the children. Through the organised rotas, all the staff are fully aware of their individual responsibilities for each session. For example, preparing snacks for the group or reading the end of session story.

Staff competently carry out the group's planning, providing the children with good resources and activities at each session. Staff support children's individual learning and development through the well-organised grouping of the children. For example, small groups for board games.

The good registration procedures keep the children safe and secure at all times. Children arriving late or leaving early are always recorded accordingly in the register. This ensures the group knows exactly how many people are on the premises at any time, during the session, keeping the children safe and secure.

The children's health, safety and well-being are fully supported through the policies and procedures used in the setting. The committee and staff regularly review all policies and procedures to ensure they meet the National Standards. The children's records are well-maintained and suitably stored to maintain confidentiality at all times.

The management and staff have a clear vision for the future of the group. They aim to continue to improve the standard and quality of care it provides for the children. Parents will be encouraged to be fully involved on the committee, to ensure they have a "voice". Staff appraisals help identify individual strengths and weaknesses. Specific training is identified and made available, to help staff perform to their highest ability. This in turn will provide higher quality care for the children.

Children benefit from the staffs' professional approach to their work. They are punctual, reliable, dedicated and enjoy being with the children. All staff have attended some training during the past year. For example, first aid, Birth to three matters and the role of the SENCO co-ordinator. Staff meet regularly to discuss their work and plan for the next term. On a daily basis they verbally evaluate the day, helping them to provide a good environment for the children at all times.

Children spend quality time with the staff during the morning when they split into small groups. This helps less confident children develop their self-esteem and feel more able to join in fully with all the activities. For example, children develop confidence playing board-games in small groups building on colour recognition and counting.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The group were required to improve their child protection policy and procedures. These have now been improved and include an explanation relating to staff keeping themselves free from allegation of abuse and how children will be protected from unvetted persons visiting the site during the session. These improvements protect staff from allegation of abuse and keep children safe and secure at all times.

The group were required to provide procedures to ensure children are kept safe at all times when visitors are on site, particularly relating to the movement of furniture and equipment and drinking hot drinks in the playroom. Suitable procedures are now in place ensuring large equipment will not be moved when children are present. All hot drinks are to be taken into the kitchen away from the children. These procedures ensure the children's safety at all times.

The group were required to improve the children's access to IT and other technology. Staff regularly plan activities to incorporate the use of computers, cash registers and calculators to ensure the children gain a good understanding and confidence when using this equipment.

The group were required to provide opportunities for the children to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world through outside visits and visitors. Children have enjoyed exploring the fire engine and learning about fire safety from the local fire officers, they touched the snake when the reptile lady visited and enjoyed the guitar and piano accordion music provided by the visiting musician. They enjoy regular visits to the local library and recently attended a service at the church to celebrate the harvest.

The group were required to improve the evaluation and assessment of the planning together with the use of the children's observations to ensure individual children's needs were met. The staff have worked hard to improve the planning and assessment of the children, particularly through regular observations. Focus activities are incorporated into the daily programme and are generally evaluated. These records would benefit from more improvement and another recommendation has been raised at this inspection. This will ensure staff are fully aware of whether they have met their objectives for all the children involved.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is readily accessible to all the children throughout each session.

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):

- improve the activity plans to show how more or less able children are fully included.
- improve the focus activity plans to demonstrate how the intended aims and objectives have been fully evaluated.

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