



St John Vianney Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Lesley Sharples
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Registered person	Agnes Quinn
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St John Vianney Playgroup has been in operation since 1982 and is supported by the local parish. The manager of 16 years is the current registered provider. The playgroup is situated in the Marton area of Blackpool and based in a single story building. Facilities include the reception area, two adjoining playrooms and the hall. There is also the provision of an enclosed outdoor play area.

Registration is for a total of 24 children age two to five years. There are a total of 32 children on roll, of whom four are in receipt of nursery education funding. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup's session times are each weekday from 09.05 to 11.35 in the mornings and 12.50 to 15.20 in the afternoons during term time only. Children can also stay the full day.

The playgroup employs three members of staff in total, all of whom hold relevant early years child care qualifications. Advice, support and training are gained from the local authority and the setting is a member of the British Association of Early Childhood Education.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have a developing understanding of the importance of being healthy. They are learning effectively about hygiene through their daily routine because they understand the importance of regular hand washing during significant times of the day. They know that their hands 'should not be dirty' and that is why they wash them before lunch. Children also learn from good role modelling set by adults. They know to roll their sleeves up so they do not get wet and dispose of paper towels appropriately. Signs also reinforce good practice. The nursery's procedures also minimise the risk of infection to children as the sick child policy is shared with parents. This helps to prevent the spread of infection to other children.

Children's health is promoted because staff hold first aid and basic food hygiene certificates in line with current guidance. This means that they can prepare food hygienically and offer advice and support in case of accidents or illness. Children's health is protected by the way thorough systems and documentation are in place to protect them regarding the administration of medication, accident recording and ensuring parents are informed.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff use information from parents effectively to meet their individual dietary needs. This ensures children's dietary requirements and preferences are adhered to at all times. Staff provide a range of healthy and nutritious snacks which include proteins and fresh fruit. This promotes children's good health and aids the development of both physical and mental growth. Children's lunches and other food items are suitably stored in the fridge. Children understand the importance of healthy eating and good nutrition as they prepare their own snack, by putting cheese on their cracker and choosing their own container for a drink. They help themselves to milk and can have as much as they wish. Children enjoy a social time during their lunch, they talk about their foods and what is in their lunch boxes with staff, who eat their own lunch with the children.

Children fully benefit from regular opportunities to play outdoors and with equipment which promotes their physical development. They are enthusiastic playing with the sand under the veranda and using the climbing frame and wheeled toys. This promotes their large muscle development well. There are resource cards with innovative ideas about physical activities to promote development through the stepping stones and children especially enjoy making dens. Outdoor waterproofs have been ordered so children can enjoy all kinds of weather and have plenty of fresh air and exercise all year round. They take delight in standing in the rain and wonder at it falling on their faces.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enter a vibrant, visually stimulating and welcoming setting in which they are safe and secure. Both indoor and outdoor environments are well maintained so that children play in safety and comfort. For example, effective risk assessments are undertaken alongside implemented policies and procedures to safeguard children and promote their well-being. The setting is adequately warm and is currently being checked to ensure sufficient warmth in the colder months. Children feel a sense of belonging because they are welcomed individually and their art work is beautifully displayed in an 'art gallery' and clearly labelled, which shows that it is valued. Children are able to move freely around the different activities, as space is sufficient and organised well. They are able to have independent choice and can access many activities for themselves, therefore allowing them to initiate their own activities.

Children benefit from the provision of safe, quality furniture, equipment and wide ranging resources which are regularly checked and maintained. Resources are plentiful, of suitable design to meet the routine needs of individual children. Especially notable are the stainless steel full size pots and pans and tea sets, which children say are 'old fashioned', but provide them with 'real' utensils for them to use. Children independently select activities that are safely stored on low level shelves and in trays. These are labelled to promote good understanding of where resources belong. They are learning to keep themselves and their environment safe by actively helping to put toys away and they eagerly do this.

Children's safety is assured as staff exercise vigilance to reduce accidental injury. They ensure total supervision of children at all times and premises are kept secure. Access is only gained by being let in by a member of staff. Visitors sign in and everyone is accounted for on the premises at all times. The collection of children is fully monitored by only allowing children to leave with those persons known to staff and authorised by parents.

Children's safety and welfare is further assured as staff clearly understand the procedures for recording and reporting any concerns relating to child protection. The designated person has identified training is required to be updated and is awaiting availability of courses. She demonstrates knowledge and awareness of a range of types of abuse and neglect and has pointers displayed for reference. The child protection statement includes relevant telephone numbers, the requirement to inform Ofsted, procedures if an allegation is made against a member of staff and up to date information regarding Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Staff are also aware of the government guidance 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused-Summary'

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in the nursery. They enter happily and eagerly greet staff and their friends. They go to play confidently with the activities and resources prepared for them. Children benefit from practitioners effective planning and the provision of activities and play opportunities to support and develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Planning links well to the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage so that

older children's development and learning needs are met but no reference is made to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Although staff are aware of the framework it is not generally being implemented in the setting. However, young children enjoy their time in the setting and are making progress in their overall development.

Children's curiosity and eagerness to play and learn are fostered through the provision of play choices and focused activities. For example, they spend time with an adult in a game of identifying and matching everyday objects and are making lovely themed Christmas decorations and art work which consolidates their learning. All children particularly enjoy stories and looking at books. They are animated and listen intently because the story is very well read and captures children's interest. This establishes a fondness of the written word and gives children depth to their imagination.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Practitioners have sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn; gained through further professional development. This is implemented generally well into the planning and delivery of the education. Planning for focused activities is detailed and clearly evidences the learning intention and the significant learning for each child present. For example, circle time allows children to express their feelings and supports promotion of language. Children enjoy and are interested in the different areas of learning. They become focused in developing early concentration skills and are responding well to adult support. This is because the learning environment and programme of activities is sufficiently planned to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning.

Teaching methods, expectations and questions sufficiently challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can, for example, number and colour questions help children relate to everyday play experiences. Children learn to share and take turns through which they learn to value and respect the feelings of others. They say goodbye to everyone when leaving the setting and relate very well to their peers, adults and visitors. This fully promotes their confidence and self-esteem and helps them to succeed.

Children continue to be excited and motivated to learn. They engage well and enjoy interacting with others. They are learning about themselves through activities and discussions, such as 'Myself, My Family, My House and Where I Live'. Children demonstrate good listening skills. They maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate especially when listening to a story. They are developing self-confidence and self-esteem and learning awareness of others in their play. For example, they take turns and share toys and are kind to each other. Children are able to undertake self-care tasks independently and manage their own personal hygiene routine.

Children are enthusiastic when exploring sounds. They join in repetitive sections of a story and show an understanding of the main elements of a story, such as a main character 'Daisy and not liking peas'. Also children tell a story to others emulating adults by turning the book round to show other children and explain the story with prompts from the adult. Children have various opportunities for mark making and make plausible attempts in writing for different purposes,

using different forms, such as lists and prescriptions in hospital play. They use a pencil and hold it effectively to form some recognisable letters.

There are sufficient sources relating to number, shape and letter within the environment. Some are displayed at child level so that they can make connections in their learning. Children are becoming competent in understanding numbers. They say and use number names in order and count reliably up to 10 every day objects. Practitioners use various opportunities for understanding number, for instance when counting how many dishes are required for the number of children present at snack time. Practitioners provide children with various opportunities for exploration and investigation by using all of their senses as appropriate. They find out about and identify some features of living things, such as observing changes with frogs spawn and looking at a caterpillar through a magnifying glass. They also plant and tend to flowers and look after them by watering them and observe change.

Children find out about and identify the use of everyday technology and use ICT and programmable toys to support their learning. They are competent in using the mouse in dragging and dropping, when decorating their Christmas tree on an educational programme. They also use a 'robot' with increasing skill and use binoculars to watch birds, which aids learning in how things work. Children explore colour, texture, shape and form in 2D and 3D. They make a Father Christmas face, using a yoghurt pot and this can be used to 'speak' with, as parts are moveable. They have also created stars from soft dough which have hardened, for a Christmas tree decoration which supports their development in using tools. Practitioners do not though, maximise opportunities to attract children to be more creative and to develop their own ideas. This is because the environment, especially in this area of learning, is not suitably organised and resourced to allow access for ongoing creativity.

In musical activities, children recognise and explore how sounds can be changed and sing simple rhymes and action songs together. They repeat sounds and are able to follow instructions in singing quietly and more loudly. They benefit from visiting professionals who provide percussion instruments so that children can express themselves using rhythm. They use their imagination in role play using play resources to be 'super heroes' and enjoy looking at themselves in the mirror. They also act out playing at hospitals and take turns in being 'hurt'. Others know to put them in the recovery position and another child gives an injection. Practitioners are skilful in supporting children's in self-initiated play so that they develop their own ideas.

Practitioners know little information about children's attainment on entry. They use brief information from parents within the 'All about me' profile, about their child's requirements and learning needs. However, they use an initial observation sheet and maintain this to record progress. Information gained from assessments is used to help move children to the next stage in their learning, for example, evaluating what the child has learned and what needs to be done to move them on. However, ongoing observations and assessments do not link to the stepping stones.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good procedures in place in understanding the diverse needs of children which help them to gain a sense of belonging and as a result, they settle in well. The setting is to helping to provide equality of opportunity for all children and their families. The policy reflects in admissions, curriculum, special needs, food and drink, and employment. The staff understand the policy and children are encouraged to participate in all activities. Children gain a positive view and understanding of diversity as staff provide a selection of meaningful activities and resources. For example, they have rich sources of positive images within their environment and displays of items from around the world. Children also have access to many appropriate role play items, small world figures, books and musical instruments.

Support for children with learning difficulties is successfully focussed on the settings policy. Designated staff have had training on the revised Code of Practice and they know how to signpost parents to appropriate professional advice if necessary. As a result, children's individual needs are effectively met. The manager is involved in working with other professionals when required, such as the speech and language therapist and the educational psychologist. A list of terms is on display in relation to guidance in using appropriate language when working with children with diverse needs.

Positive interactions from staff promote children's self-esteem. Children receive ongoing praise and encouragement for their efforts. For example, certificates are given for recognised good behaviours, such as sharing, listening, helping and consequently these strategies promote positive behaviour. As a result, children learn right from wrong and behave very well. Staff use gentle means and quiet voices when speaking with the children, facial expressions also help children know when they are behaving well, as there are plenty of smiles. Children are treated with regard when misunderstanding a request and again staff reinforce why wanted behaviour is required. Strategies are therefore appropriate to the age and understanding of children present.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children fully benefit from continuity of care between home and the setting because staff work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the children. The staff communicate regularly with parents at collection time. Conversations are focussed upon the children's needs, preferences and experiences. Parents are kept informed about their children because the staff share ongoing information with them through daily discussion, newsletters and informative notices on display. Parents speak highly of the provision and how their children are developing and learning. They also express their appreciation of the information they receive. They are included in their children's learning by the suggestions made regarding the letter of the week and how this can be included in daily life. They are also invited to bring items in and home reading is encouraged with books provided by the playgroup. The policy relating to complaints is not compliant with changes to the guidance, but the parent poster is displayed informing them of the regulator.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are looked after by staff who are suitable to do so. Recruitment and vetting procedures are sound. This ensures children are well protected and cared for by staff who have the knowledge and understanding to promote children's development in all areas. The manager has an understanding of training needs and acknowledges the 'Birth to three matters' framework has not been addressed. She is also pursuing first aid training for new members of staff to ensure initial and continuing development of staff. The adult-child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. Attendances are accurately recorded for both children and adults. Space is well organised to maximise opportunities and create different areas of play for the all round development of children. Staff are deployed effectively to promote their health, safety, enjoyment and ability to take an active part in the setting.

Established policies and procedures work effectively in practice to promote the safe and efficient management of the setting. Documentation is sufficiently organised, maintained up to date and stored to ensure confidentiality. For example, children's records hold relevant information so that staff can meet their individual needs. This contributes to the efficient operation of the setting and meets regulatory requirements.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The new staff are developing as a team and working well together in supporting each other in their roles. The manager uses her experience and knowledge and acts as an effective role model. This means that staff share a common understanding of good practice which benefits all the children receiving early education. The setting promotes the education and outcomes for children satisfactorily through effective planning and regular observations. Profiles are completed well when children leave to go to school and are complimented on favourably by other professionals.

Practitioners are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters and this works effectively in practice because all children are made welcome and made to feel special. Children therefore feel valued and supported in their learning.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were requirements relating to staff being pro-active in engaging children who are lacking in confidence and extending the independence levels of the older children approaching school age. Staff were also to increase their knowledge and ability to manage children's behaviour in a manner that is effective, consistent and promotes their welfare and development. Another recommendation was the effective use of staff's time and resources as a means of providing richer learning experiences for the children, particularly at snack time and circle time.

All requirements have been met and as a consequence, impacts positively on the care and education of children. Staff are fully aware of individual children's needs and interact and engage with all children. They also allow them time and space to develop at their own rate.

The new staff team understand and implement effective and positive strategies for children when managing behaviour which are consistent and help children learn right from wrong. Staff use both circle and snack time more efficiently to enrich children's learning experiences. Circle time is effectively planned so that children develop confidence and extend their language capabilities. Snack and meal times are a social occasion which is an important aspect of their development. Therefore, staff have implemented the required recommendations effectively and children benefit from improved practice.

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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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):

- improve understanding and implementation of the 'Birth to three matters' framework for children age two years
- update the policy procedures in relation to complaints in line with current guidance

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 how the six areas of learning are catered for within the environment to maximise learning opportunities
- obtain more specific information about children's starting points
- review how the assessment of children's progress is recorded to ensure that this links clearly to the stepping stones.

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