

St. John's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 511119
Inspection date 27 April 2007
Inspector Carol Readman

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Registered person St. Johns 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 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 Johns Pre-School opened in 1971 and moved to its present accommodation in 1998. The pre-school operates from the St. Richard's Room in St. John's Church close to Newbury town centre and the A343. The group has access to a kitchen, toilets and a small outdoor area. The pre-school serves the local community.

The pre-school opens four mornings a week during school term time. Sessions last from 09.15am to 11.45am. There are currently 27 children on roll. These include 16 funded three year olds. The pre-school accommodates children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are four regular members of staff working with the children and support is provided by an additional member of staff as needed. Three staff have Early Years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about a healthy lifestyle. Children learn good hygiene routines such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet. They use individual towels, that are washed after each use, to minimise cross infection. Children clean their hands with wipes before eating. The setting is clean and staff are vigilant to ensure that carpets are vacuumed and tables thoroughly cleaned each day. Children play in a clean and pleasant environment where they are protected from infection. Staff with appropriate first aid training are always on hand to see that minor injuries, bumps and grazes receive appropriate, effective treatment. However, the setting does not request appropriate written parental permission to seek medical advice or treatment.

Parents provide snacks of sweet and savoury biscuits, cheese and fruit for the children. They are offered milk or water with their snack in accordance with parental choice. Water is available at all other times and staff encourage children to drink whenever they need to. For example, staff offer children drinks of water to help soothe a bout of coughing.

There is good provision for children's physical development. Children develop small muscle skills as they master control of pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. They join in active circle games and enjoy playing in the outdoor area, riding tricycles and scooters or helping staff wash the play house to develop larger muscles. Sitting together on their own mats during registration and story time helps children to find their own space and develop spatial awareness. Children enjoy the outdoors each day, playing in the secure outdoor area or going for walks around the grounds and the church. They learn the value of spending time in the fresh air as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The staff at the setting provide a warm and welcoming environment for children and their parents. Each child is greeted individually by name on arrival. The warm and enthusiastic welcomes from the staff helps children enter the setting confidently. This results in children, even those very new to the setting, settling quickly. The playroom is bright and in good order with good safety measures to ensure the premises is secure.

There is a wide range of quality equipment and resources in good, clean condition that promote children's development in all areas. Careful planning ensures that a good balance of resources is provided each day. Children move confidently around the room, selecting from toys and resources put out for play. Children can access books, enjoy painting and playing in a tray full of seeds, where they can fill funnels and watch as the seeds run out. Children learn to care for their environment and keep it in good order by helping staff tidy up after free play sessions.

Children benefit from very thorough risk assessments. Staff are vigilant to ensure all aspects of the children's safety are considered. They undertake daily checks, both inside and outside. This ensures that the children can play freely and safely. Children learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, on walks all hold on to a safety rope to ensure that the children keep together. Very good staff deployment strategies ensure that children are well supported and supervised to keep them safe.

The required procedures and documents are in place, and understood by staff, to ensure children's health, safety and welfare are promoted. For example, there are clear fire procedures, which include regular fire drills and procedures for use in an emergency. All members of staff are aware of their professional duty to protect children and understand the child protection procedures. This ensures the children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children at the setting are happy and settled. There is a gradual settling in procedure so that children do not separate from their carer until they are ready. Children quickly build trusting relationships with the warm and caring staff. Children respond very well to the praise and encouragement given by staff as they attempt new skills. For example, children are praised as they help staff wash the play house. Staff encourage the children to use paintbrushes to clean the house. They squeal with delight as the warm soapy water runs down the walls and explore the bubbles, holding them in the palm of their hands and popping them. This helps to promote children's natural curiosity.

Children really enjoy the stimulating activities that the staff provide and take part readily. Children can access the toys and resources that have been set out by staff but are unable to access resources independently. This limits choices about their play and inhibits their initiative. A wide range of planned, fun activities where children learn as they play, ensures that children are keen to learn in a relaxed and friendly environment. Children play well together. For example, they build camps under the table where they enjoy chatting and sharing books.

The children play imaginatively in the home corner pretending to make cups of tea for visitors to the setting. Children move freely around the setting playing with their friends, reading books in the book corner and enjoying painting. There is a good balance of free and adult supported activities. This gives children good opportunities to organise their own play. They enjoy playing with the garage and roadway, drawing and painting and making 'sausage and snowball pies' from play dough. Staff support children in their play, praising their painting and drawings and sharing these with parents at the end of the session. Children benefit from the provision of a wide range of highly enjoyable activities. Staff constantly give warm praise to the children's achievements. This helps to build their confidence and give rise to the children having high levels of self-esteem.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress, supported by staff who use their in-depth knowledge of the foundation stage to provide a varied and broad curriculum that promotes development in all areas of learning. The teaching at the setting provides realistic challenges to children. Staff are skilful at planning activities to enhance children's learning and miss very few opportunities to extend learning spontaneously. For example, the supervisor points out shapes on the windows and pavement as children walk round the grounds. This helps to teach children new vocabulary such as rectangle and triangle. All children are actively involved in a wide range of appropriate and relevant activities and are keen to learn.

Children relate confidently to each other and to adults. They co-operate with one another and share their toys and resources well. They are eager to participate in the activities provided, for example, they are enthusiastic as they join in circle and finger rhymes, happily marching about

singing 'The Grand Old Duke of York' or curling up quietly on the floor before jumping up excitedly in a song. They help to clear away the toys and develop independence as they learn to pour their own drinks. However, children can not select resources independently. This limits them in the development of independence and initiative skills.

Good use of nursery rhymes, interesting stories and action rhymes help children develop good listening skills. Children follow simple instructions such as holding rope, taking tricycles back to the shed after play and finding their name on the table at break time. Staff encourage early writing skills by encouraging children to paint and draw. They ask questions and are learning early reading skills by finding their names at registration and snack. Children enjoy sharing books in small groups with adult support. They point at the pictures and discuss the story. This helps to foster good language and literacy skills.

Children learn to count as they play. They can say what number comes next and some children can count out up to ten objects. They describe jugs as being full or empty and are able to guess how many shovelfuls it will take to fill a bucket, declaring 'Just one more' when it is nearly full. They look at shapes and can identify common shapes. They can sort objects by two or more categories for example finding the little blue sheep from a set of animals.

Children go on walks with staff to learn about the world around them. They look for lorries as part of an 'Eye spy' game and talk about the birds on the nearby church roof. They celebrate festivals in appropriate ways to widen their knowledge of other cultures and lifestyles. Children learn about how seeds grow as they play in the seed tray and notice that seeds are different shapes, sizes and colours. Children learn design skills as they make three dimensional models. They experiment as they glue together their own models and work with staff co-operating to make a dragon head for a Chinese dragon dance. Playing with play dough helps develop small muscles and imagination skills. The children enjoy making 'sausage and snowball pies', skilfully rolling and moulding the dough into shape. Children's imagination is stimulated by role play corners, small world play sets and dressing up.

Children have lots of opportunity to develop physical skills. They play outside, riding tricycles and scooters and enjoy a wealth of circle games and action songs and rhymes. They learn to climb on the indoor climbing frame and to jump and crawl as they play a fun rope game with staff. Careful planning and good support of spontaneous, child-led activities produce positive outcomes for children in a warm and caring environment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel happy, valued and included because the staff know them well and have a very good understanding of their individual needs. Staff are sensitive to the needs of new children and provide good support so they can settle in at their own pace. The setting has an inclusion policy to ensure that any children with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included. Staff work closely with parents, provide appropriate resources and actively seek advice from other professionals in order to offer good support. Children learn about their own and other cultures in meaningful ways. They develop an appreciation of others in a diverse society through books and resources that promote positive images of age, culture, gender and disability.

Children at the setting behave very well. Staff use positive behaviour strategies of praise and encouragement. They acknowledge children's appropriate behaviour and a set of positive golden

rules reinforce what is expected of all at the setting. Children are kind and considerate, sharing their toys and taking turns.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show wonder as they look at the world around them such as observing a bird, sitting on a high roof. They reflect on what they see and talk to others about shared experiences. They understand about what is right and wrong and apologise if they are inconsiderate. They enjoy the company of others at the setting, sharing play and chatting during snack times. They learn about the lifestyles of others in meaningful ways.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the open, warm welcome that families receive. Parents are given detailed information about the setting including the Foundation Stage curriculum. They receive a copy of the setting's policies and procedures in an informative handbook. Parents attend 'settling in' visits with their children and staff encourage them to share information about their child. This helps staff gather information about the child, their individual needs and achievements. The setting encourages parents to become involved in their children's education by sending home books for children and parents to share and by inviting parents and carers to open days, such as sport's day to allow parent to enjoy activities with the children. Staff and parents do not hold formal meetings to discuss children's progress but staff ensure that they find time to talk to parents when they come to help at the setting. This gives parents the opportunity to share more information about their child and gain first hand experience of what their child is learning at the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting is well organised to care for children. Children's care is enhanced by this efficient and effective organisation. The position and responsibility of supervisor is shared, which each supervisor being clear about their individual responsibilities. Supervisors and staff have a clear sense of purpose and look continuously to improving the provision and the already high quality care they provide for children. They work very well together to provide positive outcomes for children.

The committee use robust recruitment and vetting procedures to protect children and ensure that they are cared for by adults committed to the wellbeing of children and supporting their development. Good use of the environment and careful deployment of staff contributes to promoting good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement for all the children. There are good policies and procedures in place that work well in practice to promote children's health and safety. This ensures that all the children are free to play in a warm, safe and caring environment where all participate fully. The setting has all the necessary documentation in place, only requiring amendment to one written parental permission.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The supervisors and committee have a clear vision and aims for the setting. They cascade these effectively to staff. This results in staff being well motivated and genuinely committed to providing the best of care and education for the children. There is a good focus on education with long, medium and weekly plans in place to bring about good outcomes and progress towards early learning goals for children. However, there is not an effective system in place to ensure that all children's records of achievement are up to date. This makes it difficult to plan appropriate next steps for children to further enhance their learning. The setting provides a wide range of stimulating experiences that enable

children to explore and experiment in an atmosphere of achievement and success. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to make a number of improvements to the provision of childcare and education. They were asked to encourage children's independence during snack time. For the first two weeks of term staff help children pour their own drinks at snack time to allow new children to settle. After that children pour their own drinks and help themselves to snacks that are passed around. This helps to develop children's independence skills.

The setting was asked to ensure that they show the hours of children's attendance in the register's. Children self register each morning and a member of staff marks them as being present. There is a separate section to record children who arrive late or depart early. This improves children's safety as there is always a true picture of the children present in the register.

For nursery education the setting was asked to explore ways to extend mathematical concepts with subtraction in everyday practical activities. The setting involves children in learning to subtract through the use of finger rhymes such as 'five currant buns'. Here children use their fingers and other children to count the buns and then count how many are left when one is taken away. This helps extend children's mathematical concepts.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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

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):

- revise written parental permission to seek emergency advice or treatment
- continue to develop children's independence by encouraging wider selection of resources and support them in making choices about their learning (this also applies to nursery education).

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):

- ensure children's records of achievements are up to date and are used in planning to determine the next steps for children's learning.

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