

# St Luke's Pre-School Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 300917  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 28 March 2007   |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Karen Cockings  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | St Lukes Church Centre, Blackbrook Road, Lodge Moor, Sheffield, S10 4DE |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 0114 2301624  |
| <b>E-mail</b>                  |   |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | St Luke's Pre-school Nursery Ltd  |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Integrated  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | Full day care, Out of School 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](http://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. Luke's Pre-School Nursery was registered as a sessional community playgroup nearly 30 years ago, and has offered full day care since 1997. It operates from St Luke's Church Centre, in the Lodge Moor area of Sheffield, and serves the local community. A maximum of 40 children may attend the nursery and out of school care provision at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday during term time from 07.30 to 18.00. The holiday club operates between 08.00 and 18.00 during school holidays except for a week at Christmas. School age children are collected by mini-bus from Hallam Primary School.

The nursery has use of several rooms within the church, but operates mainly from a large hall and adjoining lounge. The premises are shared with other users on most days. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll; of these 35 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff, six of whom have an appropriate early years qualification. There are also two administrative workers.

The nursery receives support from the local authority and has been successful in achieving the gold award for its participation in the Pathways to Quality in Early Years Childcare and Education scheme.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children enjoy many opportunities for active play, both indoors and outside the setting. Good use is made of the outdoor area and there are plans to develop this further. A free flow system operates for parts of the day, which means that children can make their own choices about whether they play indoors or outside. Children use equipment with growing confidence as they climb on the climbing frame and steer tricycles skilfully around the garden. They like to 'paint' the walls with water and build with large crates. They learn new skills and develop confidence in themselves as they are shown how to make a special pedal scooter move forward, pressing first one foot, then the other. Indoors, they move freely around the spacious play areas, showing delight in moving their bodies in different ways. They have great fun bending and stretching as they 'make waves' with a large piece of stretchy fabric and bounce their teddy up and down on it. Interesting outings are organised to parks, farms and beauty spots in the surrounding area, providing more opportunities for children to be outdoors and to learn about the world around them.

Healthy eating patterns are promoted well within the setting. Parents send packed lunches for their children but snacks are provided by the nursery. Children are offered a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, which they eat with enjoyment. They are keen to try to cut up fruit for themselves with assistance from watchful staff. They sit sociably together at lunch time, chatting with each other and with staff about their favourite foods and what is good for them. Planned activities, such as helping to cut up vegetables to make soup or preparing eggs for their sandwiches, encourage independence and self-help skills. Drinks of milk and water are readily available. Children learn how to press the lever on the water flasks to make them pour.

Children are protected from the risk of infection because staff observe good hygiene practice, particularly when preparing food or changing nappies. They encourage children with hand washing routines and remind them about blowing noses and disposing of tissues safely. Children learn about the care of their own bodies through daily routines and planned activities. For example, as part of role play they set up a shoe shop and talk about how they need to have their feet measured. Visits to farms and parks provide opportunities for children to learn about washing their hands after touching animals and that some animals may bite. The nursery's policy about the care of sick children is shared with parents so they understand that they need to make alternative arrangements if children are ill. Appropriate records are kept of accidents and medication administered, and stickers are used to remind staff of the need to inform parents that an accident has occurred.

## **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and welcoming environment. Despite the constraints of shared premises, staff create stimulating play spaces each day where children can make choices and develop good levels of independence. Low-level storage units enable children to select many resources safely for themselves. Direct access to the outdoor space from the main hall allows children to move in and out freely at most sessions. The outdoor area is fully enclosed with both grassed and safety surfaces, allowing children to practise physical skills within a secure, yet interesting play space. The daily setting out of equipment ensures that resources are routinely checked for safety.

Staff conduct regular risk assessments and supervise children carefully. They understand the importance of maintaining children's security, especially when there are other users in the building. The outer door is kept locked and visitors ring to gain entry. Staff are vigilant when children are moving between rooms for specific activities and they ensure that children negotiate stairs safely. They oversee children's independent access to toilet facilities from the main hall, although this is identified as an area for further monitoring, in order to ensure that risks to children are minimised.

Children learn how to use their environment and equipment safely. For example, they learn to take care on the sloping path when using tricycles and that hot liquids can be dangerous as they help staff to make play dough. During outings they develop an awareness of road safety and how they need to be careful near water. Creative activities, such as making their own zebra crossing, provide opportunities for discussion and for learning about safe practice. Children are involved in regular fire drills so that they become familiar with emergency evacuation procedures.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff understand their responsibilities within child protection procedures. They know about the importance of reporting any concerns to the manager and senior staff undertake additional training to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge about the procedures to follow. The child protection policy is shared with parents. However, it has not yet been updated to reflect current guidance and to incorporate the procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and are familiar with the daily routines of the nursery. Many seek out special friends on arrival or hurry over to a favourite activity. Staff set out the play environment to capture children's interest and to enable them to make their own choices. For example, they can often decide for themselves whether to play indoors or outside. Exploratory play with sand, water, paint and dough is part of children's everyday experience and the thoughtful presentation of resources encourages children to use their imaginations to develop their own play ideas. The climbing frame draped with large cloths becomes a tent or a pirate ship, and there are cosy areas where children can enjoy sharing a special book. Staff show interest in what children do and say, making regular observations to help them to understand how they can help children to make progress in their learning.

Children participate eagerly in a varied range of stimulating activities. They plant seeds, find dinosaur shapes in rock formations, enjoy climbing, balancing and moving in response to music.

Their creativity is nurtured as they paint and make collage pictures. Staff support them well as they play, while allowing them the freedom to explore an activity at their own pace. They skilfully involve children in conversations, asking questions to extend children's thinking.

Children build strong relationships with staff and with each other. They play together in small groups or enjoy a more solitary activity, knowing that staff are nearby to assist them if necessary. They develop confidence in themselves because they know that staff value their achievements and are interested in what they have to say. All children are grouped together and are able to participate in activities at their own level. Staff recognise the importance of providing older, more-able children with sufficient challenge while ensuring that younger children are also able to participate fully. Children who attend the out of school provision enjoy a comfortable and welcoming space where they can relax and take part in a varied range of appropriate activities.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. This ensures that children progress well in all areas of their development. Staff have a secure knowledge of the early learning goals, using this to plan and provide a varied range of experiences for children to promote their learning. Children are motivated to learn through the provision of stimulating activities and resources which sustain their interest. They develop good levels of independence as they select activities and begin to manage their own personal care. There are uninterrupted periods of time when children can explore their own ideas and build on their learning. Children develop a good awareness of expectations and boundaries, learning how to manage the shared use of resources. For example, they use the large egg timer to help them to take turns on the computer. They are involved in interesting projects which help to raise their awareness of different cultures and needs.

There are many opportunities for children to engage in conversations. Most are confident to express their own needs and to share their news with staff and with each other. They listen intently to stories, especially when they are able to get involved and recall significant phrases. Older children know how they can use books to find out new information or to extend another activity. For example, while building with the construction toys they find a book on shapes and match the bricks to different pictures in it. They have opportunities to practise mark making and early writing skills as they paint and draw. They begin to use writing for a purpose when making shopping lists and party invitations. It is acknowledged that the setting does not have unlimited display space but there is potential for further improving displays and labels at child height, including examples of children's work.

Children show interest in numbers and develop good counting skills as part of their play and daily routines. For example, they count the number of cups of flour they need to make dough and the number of pebbles they have put into a container. They begin to identify numbers accurately in their environment and use mathematical language often as they play, to describe size and shape. Staff organise interesting activities which promote children's understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, they devise a simple graph to show children's different choices of toppings for their pancakes and encourage children to work out how many votes have been cast for each party at their 'election' day.

There are many opportunities for children to develop knowledge and awareness of the world around them. Staff plan interesting outings so that children can learn more about the local environment and about the natural world. They visit nearby farms to see new-born lambs and bring in their own pets during National Pet Week. They plant seeds and investigate what they

need to make them grow. Walks in the surrounding countryside stimulate interest in the shape and formation of rocks and what happens when pebbles are thrown into water. Children are fascinated by what happens when the church is used as a polling station so staff set up their own election day when children vote for either the 'Eat more veg' or 'Eat more fruit' parties. Children develop a good sense of time and place as they talk together about their homes and families and consider growth and change. They competently use technology, such as the computer, water dispensers and cameras, developing their confidence and understanding of how equipment works.

Children love to explore different textures as they roll and mould dough and play with sand and water. They handle items in the collage tray and talk about how some feel 'fluffy and soft'. A mud making activity with coloured soapy water and tissues fascinates them as they dabble and squash it, observing how it changes as colour is added. Staff organise large scale painting activities, such as screen painting with large brushes and rollers, which encourages lots of movement and conversation. Children participate enthusiastically in songs and action rhymes and they like to play imaginatively, using available resources well to develop their own stories. For example, the wooden blocks become dinosaur bones that they find on their treasure island. Staff are nearby to support and encourage but children are given time and space to develop their own ideas.

Staff interact effectively with children to stimulate their curiosity and extend their learning. They make careful observations of children as they play and also consult parents about what the children like to do at home. This helps them to plan and provide activities at nursery that will be interesting and challenging. There is a strong emphasis on child-led activities. For example, staff observe the children's fascination with the dinosaur shapes of the rocks during an outing and build on this at the setting by developing related activities to consolidate and extend children's learning. A calm, positive approach encourages children to play cooperatively together so that they can benefit fully from the play experiences offered.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children feel a sense of belonging in the familiar environment, where they are able to make independent choices about their play. Staff get to know them well and are keen to learn from parents about children's interests, likes and dislikes. The introduction of home observation sheets, which parents are encouraged to complete, helps staff to find out more about children so that they can provide appropriate activities and resources. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion within the setting and staff work closely with parents and other professionals to support children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. They actively seek out resources to help children develop skills, such as a special pedal scooter for children with mobility problems. Additional funding is sought to enable the setting to provide individual assistance where necessary. Staff sensitively support parents and children as they deal with the transition to school.

Children learn about different beliefs and lifestyles as they engage in activities and use resources which reflect the wider community. They find out about how others live as they participate in events, such as a Global Citizenship Project, where they are involved in a sponsored water carrying activity in order to raise funds for a water desalination unit for a village in India. Regular outings to local parks and shops help to promote children's awareness of their own local community. Staff organise the play environment effectively to enable children to make choices and decisions. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are cared for by friendly, caring staff who maintain a positive approach in the management of children's behaviour. They warmly acknowledge children's achievements, which helps to build confidence and self-esteem. Children develop a sense of responsibility for their environment and for each other. They help, for example, to clean off the frost on the outdoor toys so that they will be ready for use. Older children are helpful towards younger ones, showing them where to put their empty milk cartons and how to use equipment. Effective methods are used to help children understand about sharing and taking turns, such as involving them in drawing up a rota for the computer and using a large egg timer to demonstrate clearly how much time they have.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff recognise the importance of working closely with parents to meet children's needs and build trusting relationships with them. A varied range of information is shared both verbally and in written form. Notice boards are used well and newsletters are regularly distributed. Annual questionnaires provide an opportunity for parents to express their views and to make suggestions about the ways in which the setting could be further improved. Parents are extremely positive about the nursery and are pleased with the progress children make there. Children's development records are available for their parents to see at any time and special appointments are made to share these formally before children move on to school. Staff find ways of involving parents in their children's learning. For example, they now ask parents to make their own observations of their children at home. There are also opportunities for parents to share their skills and knowledge with the children, by attending as a visitor to talk to the children about their role. There is potential, however, to further develop this aspect of the provision.

Parents receive a welcome booklet about the nursery before their child is admitted and this includes useful information about the way in which the setting operates. They also have access to written policies and procedures, including information about how they may raise any concerns. The nursery has procedures for dealing with complaints and record keeping systems. However, procedures are in need of review and updating to ensure that they comply fully with regulations and provide information about how a parent may contact the regulator if necessary.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning needs are met well through the effective organisation of the nursery. Staff work well together to create an interesting play environment with a varied range of resources and activities. Children have space to move around freely and opportunity to make their own choices. There is a balance of age and gender within the staff team, providing children with good role models. Staff are deployed well so that children receive appropriate levels of support and attention. Recruitment and checking systems are in place to ensure that staff are suitably qualified to work with children.

Record keeping systems are maintained well overall, although in some instances paperwork is not organised so as to be easily accessible. For example, accident record sheets are not well ordered and there is a need for improved recording of staff clearances. A comprehensive collection of policies and procedures help the setting to run smoothly. These are implemented well and are regularly reviewed. In some instances, such as with regard to complaints and child protection, policies require updating to ensure that they clearly reflect recent changes.

Leadership and management of the educational provision is good. This has a positive impact on children's progress. The manager works alongside staff, setting a good example and actively

monitoring and supporting them. There is a strong commitment to the continuous evaluation and improvement of practice, reflected in the setting's success in achieving the gold award for their participation in 'Pathways to Quality', the local quality assurance scheme. The provision works closely with advisory teachers in the local authority to identify and act upon areas for improvement. Staff are encouraged to attend additional training to enhance their practice and enthusiastically welcome new ideas and knowledge, in order to promote children's 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 care inspection the provider agreed to ensure that policies are monitored and reviewed and that required documentation can be stored securely but readily available for inspection. Systems are now in place for the regular review and updating of policies. This involves all staff and ensures that, overall, policies reflect changes and current practice. A lockable cupboard and filing cabinets are now available so that confidential information can be stored securely.

The provider also agreed to review and systematically monitor the way transitions between rooms are organised. This has been addressed by ensuring that there are clear arrangements made for the shared use of the building. Staff ensure that a suitable range of activities and appropriate staffing ratios are maintained when alternative rooms are used. This helps to provide continuity for children and safeguards their welfare.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that the range of activity and resource choices within focused activity times be improved. The nursery ensures that a wide range of resources and activities is accessible to all. Staff understand how they can differentiate within all aspects of the continuous provision to promote children's learning and to provide them with suitable challenge.

In addition, it was recommended that the provider improve the way information is shared with parents about their child's progress and their opportunity to access and contribute to their child's development records. Staff ensure that there is ongoing daily communication and parents are informed about how they can access their child's development records. They are able to make an appointment with their child's key worker if necessary. Formal appointments are offered to the parents of children who are in their last term at nursery so that records can then be shared. These measures help to ensure that there are opportunities for sharing information about children's development, although there is potential to develop further ways of involving parents in this process.

### **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

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):

- continue to assess risks in relation to the security of children and shared use of the building
- review and update policies and procedures with specific regard to complaints and child protection
- review the organisation of paperwork to ensure that records are easily accessible.

#### 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):

- consider ways of improving displays at child height, including labels and displays of children's work
- continue to explore further ways of involving parents in their 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)