



Little Saints Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY343699
Inspection date	23 January 2007
Inspector	Linda Pressley
Setting Address	St.Thomas Primary School, School Road, Exeter, Devon, EX2 9AF
Telephone number	01392 217880
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Registered person	Jayne Margaret Hooper
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Saints Pre-school was registered in its current premises in April 2005 and taken over by the current owner in September 2006. The pre-school has use of one main room with a small outdoor play area. It operates in its own premises attached to St Thomas Primary School in the St Thomas area of Exeter. The pre-school has strong links with the school. The children have the opportunity to visit the school for story times, to use the school library, the playground and the adventure trail. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 throughout the year, shutting for two weeks at Christmas; children can attend on a sessional basis or for the full day. Funded nursery education sessions are offered from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00, term times only. The pre-school is proposing to offer after school care for children attending St Thomas Primary School from April 2007. Three staff, including the owner, work in the pre-school, two of them hold appropriate childcare qualifications with the third working towards a qualification. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance

and receives support from the local authority. They work closely with the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language. There are currently 31 children on roll. Of these, 28 receive nursery education funding.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children play and learn in a clean, healthy environment, protected from infection. The spread of infection throughout the setting is kept low through a set of well implemented procedures. The tables are wiped down with anti bacterial spray before and after snack time and at lunchtime. The toilets are cleaned at the end of each day and at intervals in the day if required. The children are learning about hygiene routines, washing their hands after using the toilet and before snack time and at lunchtime. Staff minimise cross infection by reminding children not to lick shared utensils, for example when children use shared plastic knives to spread butter on crackers as part of the snack time routine. The children have unlimited, continuous access to fresh drinking water from a water cooler. Children help themselves to water independently using disposable cups reducing the risk of cross infection. Children are further protected from infection through the settings ill child policy which states if a child falls ill whilst in the care of the setting a parent will be contacted to collect the child and that children should not return to the setting until 48 hours after the last bout of sickness.

The children are learning about being healthy. They are introduced to a good range of healthy foods at snack time and at lunchtime, for example, a wide range of fruit, toast, and crackers. Healthy eating is also promoted through a no chocolate policy in lunchboxes. The children engage in physical activity each day, sometimes using the adventure playground to run jump and climb and on other occasions playing outdoors with skipping ropes, balls and hoops to improve physical skills and develop hand eye coordination.

The accurate, clear record keeping helps the staff to ensure that the children's health is protected and promoted at all times. The record of accidents clearly states the child's name, the nature of the injury, first aid, administered and that parents are informed of any accidents that occur. Prior parental permission is sought for emergency treatment if required and to administer any medicine whilst the children are attending the provision. All members of staff hold a current first aid certificate which includes specific instruction on paediatric first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children are welcomed by the child friendly environment of the setting. Good use is made of the available space, with clearly defined play areas. On some occasions during cold weather the temperature of the room falls below comfortable levels. Staff counteract this through advising parents to ensure children wear warm clothing and by having extra clothing available for the children to put on if they complain they are cold. The good range of toys and equipment provided enables the children to build skills and expertise across all areas of learning and for

staff to provide productive play opportunities. All toys and equipment are stored at a low level so that the children can access them safely.

The children are protected from harm by the staff's awareness of child protection issues. Staff are well informed regarding the signs and symptoms of abuse and are clear about the settings reporting and monitoring procedures in the event of suspected cruelty or neglect. The provision has a clear written child protection policy outlining procedures in the event of suspected abuse, but this does not include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The omission of this part of the policy puts children at risk of harm when staff and management do not have clear child protecting procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made.

The premises are kept secure at all times whilst the children are in attendance. The gated entrance is bolted whilst the provision is in operation. Parents and visitors can request access by ringing a bell. Arrival and departure times are managed effectively and safely. A member of staff greets all children at the door at the beginning of each session and children are called individually to the door into the care of parents and carers at departure times. At the beginning of each session when all the expected children are present the door is locked and the safety chain is engaged. The children's safety is considered by the staff at all times. Daily risk assessments are carried out especially to the outside areas to ensure no new hazards have arisen, for example, glass bottles or other items thrown into the outside play areas overnight. Staff carry a first aid kit, any required medication, for example asthma inhalers, and the register with them at all times when taking the children away from the premises.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enjoy their time at the setting. They separate from parents with confidence, settle to the daily routine quickly, with enthusiasm and clear purpose. The stimulating environment provided by the staff develops the children's interest and curiosity. The room is rich in print, number and pictures. Children's work is displayed and labelled creatively, giving the children a feeling of pride in their work and a sense of belonging to the setting. The children are building positive relationships with their peers and the members of staff. They share resources and toys, play cooperatively and initiate conversation. The children's strong sense of belonging, security and independence creates a solid base from which they can experience all the areas of learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children experience learning in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum through the focussed planning done by the staff. Staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage enables them to plan activities that encompass many different areas of learning, for example the children study insects and small creatures, developing their investigative and exploratory skills. They also consolidate their counting skills by counting the number of legs on the plastic insects and spiders and they learn that print carries meaning by looking at the labelled pictures of the insects. The staff use sound observation techniques to record the children's attainment. They observe children in whole group time and play situations noting achievements to be linked to the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage

curriculum. The children are making good progress, however recording procedures do not enable staff to record an accurate picture of every child's attainment.

The children are successful learners. They sustain long periods of concentration in self chosen play and directed activity, for example in whole group time they regularly spend 20 minutes engaged in early calculation skills, linking letters to sounds and listening to and joining in with familiar stories. The formal and informal teaching experienced by the children is good. Focused whole group activity is motivating and invites the children to participate as active learners, for example when learning to identify colours children are sent on a search of the classroom to find colours enabling them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. In play activities the staff support and encourage learning through sensitive support and allowing the children to experience good levels of challenge, for example in physical play on the adventure playground. Most children are able to challenge themselves to climb, balance, and swing on the apparatus. Staff acknowledge their success and also give good levels support to the few children who need to gain confidence. The children are able to recognise their own achievements, drawing the staff's attention to how high they climb, how far they can jump and how well they can balance. The children are developing small muscle movements and skills in using one handed tools, tightening and loosening plastic bolts on a play workbench using a screwdriver and a spanner. They engage in creative activities selecting different materials to design their own pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children demonstrate positive attitudes and dispositions in their play and relationships with each other. They are well behaved and have a good understanding of behaviour expectations and boundaries set within the pre-school. The staff create a purposeful play and learning environment through praise of expected behaviour and gentle reminders about unacceptable behaviour. The staff give clear consistent instructions within the daily timetable helping the children establish expected levels of behaviour and knowledge of the routine, for example the children are given a five minute time check before the end of the play session before tidy up time. This tells the children playtime will come to end soon and communicates that tidy up time will follow. The children are helped by staff to recognise good behaviour. They are given stickers for good listening in whole group time and praised individually in play situations. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Equal opportunity is promoted well. Children are treated as individuals and personal needs are considered, for example children who have difficulty settling are given extra attention on arrival to enable them to settle and to have equal opportunity to access the play and learning opportunities offered. The children are learning about different cultures, difference, diversity and similarity through a range of good resources and toys. The children are introduced to festivals from a range of different cultures through a topic on food from around the world.

There are currently no children with difficulties and/or disabilities attending the pre-school. The staff have sufficient knowledge and support from the Area Special Needs Coordinator to identify any child in need of additional help and to implement any necessary individual learning plans. Information given to parents relating to the care of their children is clearly explained. Parents are given a brief outline of the policies, rules and regulations of the setting. Parents

are asked to supply emergency contact numbers, permission for medical treatment, any allergies the child may have, the address and date of birth of their child, ensuring that vital information is exchanged when the child begins to attend the pre-school.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers expressed high levels of satisfaction with the service offered by the pre-school. The parents and carers are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum through a prospectus which is issued to every parent and carer when their child begins to attend the pre-school. Parents and carers are informed about their child's progress towards the early learning goals at parents consultation evenings which are held each term. Parents and carers can ask informally about their children's progress at any time when dropping off or collecting children. Parents and carers can also book to see a member of staff if they are concerned in any way about their child's progress. The pre-school also runs a partnership with parents group which meets once a term. The parents and carers are given a say in how the provision is run and the activities offered. They are involved in their child's learning through discussion, for example the transition from pre-school to the reception class of the adjoining first school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. The daily organisation of the pre-school enables the children to access a stimulating curriculum in safety. Most documentation is clear and organised to support the care of the children, but the child protection policy is incomplete, so does not fully protect the children. Policy is impacting on practice. Staff are aware of the written procedures and carry them out in their daily practice. Regulatory documentation is in place and is being used to safeguard the children, for example registers are completed accurately each day and procedures for emergency evacuation of the building are displayed. The organisation of transition times in the day is managed effectively, enabling the staff to establish routines and to maintain purposeful activity for the children. The staff hold appropriate qualifications and attend a variety of training days to consolidate their knowledge both in the care and education of the children. The manager ensures that all staff working with the children are suitable to do so through Criminal Records Bureau checks.

Leadership and management are good. The manager has a good working relationship with her staff and the children. Staff are happy and relaxed, well informed and carry out their duties effectively both when caring for the children and providing educational opportunities. The manager monitors and evaluates the curriculum well in most areas. The monitoring of planning and observation of the children's progress is carried out effectively, but record keeping informing target setting for individual children to ensure challenge is not sufficiently developed, making accurate target setting difficult.

The manager has made improvements to the provision since taking over the registration last year and has a clear vision for the future. The pre-school has been refurbished and new toys purchased. The manager is proactive in improving experiences for the children through a program of training for her staff. The staff have attended training on a variety of different child related topics, for example planning, the play based curriculum and personal, social, emotional development.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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 Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- maintain the room at an adequate temperature to ensure children's comfort
- update the Child Protection policy to include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff

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):

- use record keeping to provide an accurate record of children's progress against the stepping stones and to plan the next steps in their 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