



Standish Under 5's

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322894
Inspection date	02 March 2007
Inspector	Victoria Gail Halliwell
Setting Address	Standish High School, Kenyon Road, Standish, Wigan, Lancashire, WN6 0NX
Telephone number	07730 230 476
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Registered person	Standish Under Fives Playgroup
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?

Standish Under five's Pre-School opened in 1978. It operates from two rooms within a double portable cabin, located in the grounds of Standish Community High School in Standish, Wigan. The facility serves the local and wider community. A maximum of 40 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open from 08.30 to 17.00 during term time and some school holidays. A parent and toddler session is offered on two afternoons per week. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 10 member of staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The facility is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and The British Association for Early Childhood Education. There is also liaison with Standish Community High School, the local Sure Start team, the local health clinic and feeder Primary Schools.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is effectively maintained, because staff consistently implement good hygiene practices. For example, cleaning tables before snacks and meals and regularly washing their hands. Staff are positive role models who lead by example and consistently encourage the children to wash their hands after wiping their nose or after toileting. Staff plan interesting activities which increase children's awareness of their health and personal hygiene, for example, there is a visit from the dental hygienist which results in discussions about foods that are good for teeth. They provide attractive resources, such as posters and books to further develop children's awareness. As a result, children are becoming very aware of the importance their own good health and hygiene. Many children comment sympathetically as they lift the flaps in books to reveal people who are unwell and recall their own experiences. Staff are familiar with and responsive to children's individual health needs, for example, by calmly reassuring one child who has some difficulty breathing during outdoor play whilst quickly providing his inhaler.

Children are developing healthy eating habits. Very good consideration is given to the provision of healthy snacks, for example, a colourful selection of fruit and raw vegetables are provided on a daily basis. Children choose when they would like to have their snack and enjoy a relaxed experience, sitting with a small group of peers and serving themselves from a well stocked plate. The provision of a large water dispenser encourages children to help themselves to regular drinks throughout the day, staff and older children are readily available to support and assist younger children within the group, to ensure they do not become thirsty. Packed lunches are provided by parents at lunch time, clear advice and suggestions are provided to encourage parents to support the setting's healthy eating policy at lunchtime. Parents are well informed about and have commented on the positive impact of the lunchtime arrangements. One parent states that it is easier to encourage her child to eat healthy options, because he isn't sitting alongside children eating a large selection of sweet treats.

All children have excellent daily opportunities to play outdoors in the fresh air and sunlight which contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Good consideration is given to the planned provision of outdoor activities which frequently links the current theme or topic. For example, following the story of Little Red Riding Hood, the children go outside to play 'What time is it Mr Wolf?' which involves them creeping up behind the wolf and running away. Children have excellent opportunities to move in a variety of ways as staff become fully involved in outdoor sessions, singing action rhymes and playing games which encourage the children to walk on tip toe, or move sideways like a crab. A good selection of small resources, including balls, hoops, tunnels and tricycles, encourage children to explore and move freely. However, children have insufficient

opportunities to use large apparatus to practise and refine their climbing skills. Children take advantage of the many opportunities they are given to use small tools and equipment, such as scissors, glue spreaders and pencils, skilfully.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and their families are warmly welcomed into the setting. Parents and children are familiar with the routines and quickly remove coats and find their names on the self registration board. Children are stimulated by the learning environment and quickly become engaged in an activity of their choice. Generally, space is effectively used and good systems are in place to ensure children benefit from the full range of play opportunities. They move between the two rooms, using clear space in the second room to engage in dance and movements sessions. The setting is very well resourced and there is an abundance of play materials which are continually available, so children can make informed choices about how they spend their time. However, the provision of such a wide range of resources, and problematic storage arrangements for coats, at times impacts on the available play space and restricts children's ability to play freely in some areas.

Staff are very aware of the children's safety and established systems are well implemented to ensure children can move around the setting and play outdoors safely. For example, staff conduct a daily inspection of the premises and take immediate action to remove potential hazards, the outdoor area is checked immediately prior to use to ensure it is free from hazards. Routine documents are completed so staff are aware that checks have been completed and that area's are safe for use. Very good procedures are in place in respect of fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures. Each term, fire drills are completed daily for one week to ensure all children and staff are familiar with the procedures they must follow in the event of them needing to evacuate in an emergency situation. As a result of clear explanations, children are becoming increasingly aware of their own and the safety of others, for example, older children understand that if there is too much sand or water on the floor that someone might slip. One child calls out to his friend 'watch out there's sand on the floor there'.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded. All staff are familiar with the settings child protection procedure and understand their duty to record and report any concerns they may have to the designated child protection coordinator or the manager. Key staff have recently updated their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues through training. They are confident in their ability to implement the setting's child protection procedures to protect a child from possible harm. Parents are routinely informed of the setting's duty to report any concerns they may have.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled because they are cared for by a consistent staff team, who know them well and provide consistent care. Staff are very aware of children's individual needs and work well as a team, so they can provide individual support or assistance as required. The key

worker system for children over three years is well developed and is based on children's age and ability. Consequently, these children consistently complete activities and circle time with the same carer and group of peers whilst also forming secure attachments with other members of staff. The key worker system for the children aged from two to three years is less developed, these children also benefit from good relationships with a small and consistent group of carers, but do not have a fully developed system. For example, a key person attends to personal needs, such as toilet training, completes records of development and liaises with parents.

All children enjoy a wide range of well presented, interesting activities which are routinely adapted by staff to meet individual needs and promote purposeful play. For example, a group of two year old children begin to lose interest in the train track as they are unable to form a long enough track, a member of staff promptly offers support and assists them in the assembly process and suggests the addition of the roadway as two children have cars. The children then become absorbed in their activity, running their respective cars and trains around the track. Staff build on children's natural curiosity and listen carefully to what children say, a sand activity naturally progresses to a discussion about the weather, as children pour the sand through a sieve, one child comments 'it's like rain', another says 'its snow'. The member of staff then questions the children, encouraging them to think about their experience of snow and rain, and the day's weather.

Key staff are developing a sound understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have devised assessment records which reflect the children's progress. These include a termly narrative profile report for parents, which provides them with an interesting overview of their child's development and planned learning intentions.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children over three years are provided with a broad range of well planned activities and experiences, as a result they are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Key staff are very knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage curriculum and have a sound understanding of how children learn. They develop medium term plans on a weekly basis to ensure they reflect children's current interests and build on what children have learned or experienced the previous week. Interesting themes and topics are skilfully woven throughout all aspects of play, for example, during the topic on 'Little Red Riding Hood', children are encouraged to make connections to their own life and experiences, as staff ask them about their grandparents, where they live and if they visit them. Children then look at and discuss pictures of older ladies, before drawing their own pictures of 'Grandma'. They build 'Grandma's' house in the construction area and bake cakes like Red Riding Hood did for her grandma.

Staff know individual children well and good consideration is given to extension activities or providing additional support, so that all children are appropriately challenged and supported. For example, more able children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary or to think about the effects of heat, as staff ask them how they travel to 'Grandma's house' or ask them why the butter is melting during the baking activity. Staff create an interesting and stimulating learning environment which encourages children to explore and learn independently. The

continuous provision of a wide range of accessible resources provides excellent opportunities for children to practice and refine new skills following planned activities.

Children play cooperatively, they value the relationships they have with one another and frequently seek out their friends to share experiences, particularly when engaging in imaginative role play or using small world resources, such as play figures and farm animals. Most children communicate confidently, they speak easily within a group situation and enjoy sharing their own experiences, one three year old child recalls his grandma having a sore eye and shares this with the group. Children enjoy books and handle them with care, many take advantage of the library service offered by the setting and browse through the books before making their selection.

Children have many rich opportunities to learn about the natural world, as they consider the life cycles of animals, observing new chicks, looking at the lifecycle of the butterfly and examining a real snake skin. Staff understand the value of first hand experiences and work hard to recreate experiences for the children. For example, during harvest, staff lay out real vegetables so children can ride on their trucks to harvest them. In turn the vegetables are taken to the role play area which is converted into a farm shop, so children can weigh out and sell the vegetables they have harvested. Finally the children wash and chop the vegetables to make their own soup.

Staff routinely question the children and promote their mathematical thinking, for example asking them to count how many children, cups or plates there are and then calculate how many they will need. As a result, more able children count confidently by rote and are able to solve simple mathematical problems. They are able to recognise numerals and use mathematical resources, such as the abacus, confidently. Younger children have many daily opportunities to learn about number as they count by rote and sing number rhymes.

Staff routinely observe what children can do and regularly update children's records of achievements to show the progress they are making. However, a small number of assessments profiles do not fully reflect the very good progress some children are making in particular areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are valued and respected as individuals, there is a strong emphasis on inclusion throughout the setting and children are encouraged to respect and care for one another. Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported, staff consult with and seek guidance from parents to ensure they can communicate effectively. For example, parents provide a list of key words which are prominently displayed in many areas for staff reference. Staff use these alongside gestures and facial expressions to communicate, whilst also speaking in English, as parents have requested their second language is developed. Children have many opportunities to learn about the cultures and lifestyles of others through interesting practical activities, such as making a large dragon to parade around the setting during Chinese New Year.

Children with learning difficulties are well supported. Key staff work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach. Staff know individual children well and routinely monitor their progress or achievements following daily activities. Whilst daily verbal reports are provided for parents, this level of support and monitoring is not fully reflected in the written records.

Children throughout the nursery are well behaved. As a result of consistent boundaries, clear explanations and observing the staff who are positive role models, children are developing a clear sense of right and wrong. Most children play harmoniously and know they must take turns and share resources. Staff skilfully manage unwanted behaviour, taking care not to label children and avoiding confrontation. For example, as disagreements persist over who should have the fire fighter figures, staff advise the children that the fire fighters need a rest and suggests the children find something else to play with whilst they lie down. The children quickly find alternatives and play well together.

Partnership with parents is good. The inclusive nature of this setting extends to supporting parents and families as a whole. Parents are valued as their child's first educator and are actively encouraged to share what they know about their child, both prior to admission and through continual verbal exchanges at arrival and collection times. Parents are also invited to attend individual review meetings with their child's key worker, when they are again encouraged to share details of their child's achievements. Parents are well informed about routine events and planned learning within the setting, so that they can continue to support their child's learning at home. They are encouraged to use the library service to further develop their child's interest in books and to share any skills or suggestions they may have.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's welfare, care and learning is effectively promoted, as a result of clear organisation and a strong commitment from all the staff to the nursery's aims. The experienced manager works closely with and routinely consults the very stable and established staff team. Recruitment of new staff is relatively rare and most staff enter the setting as volunteers. Clear systems are in place to ensure all adults are suitable to care for young children. Students and volunteers are initially very well supported as they work alongside an experienced member of staff. Support for staff continues to be good. Regular appraisals are used to identify particular areas for development and access to relevant training is good, with most staff attending between two and four courses each year.

Staff deployment is very good and staff to child ratios consistently exceed those required. As a result, children regularly benefit from individual support and small group activities. Staff are routinely available to listen to what children have to say, they have time to speak to parents or liaise with other agencies without impacting on the quality of care the children receive. Staff generally utilise the available space well, however, an abundance of resources and limited storage facilities does, at times, impact slightly on children's ability to play freely within some areas.

The quality of the leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager takes lead responsibility for developing the plans in consultation with experienced key practitioners. She has a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and understands how children learn. She routinely observes staff and monitors the progress children are making to ensure the delivery of the nursery education is effective.

Attention to written documentation is good. The setting has, following some minor revisions to ensure they fully reflect it's own practice, adopted the policies and procedures devised by the Pre-school Learning Alliance. Records relating to children's attendance, accidents, parental consents and personal details are satisfactorily maintained. Information regarding the nurseries operation is well known by staff and shared with parents, who each receive an informative prospectus.

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, the manager agreed to improve records relating to parental consent and the arrival and departure times of staff, children and visitors. All records are now satisfactorily maintained to promote the welfare and care of the children. The manager has also further developed the planning system, to ensure there are no gaps in the educational planning and has included greater detail of differentiation for more and less able children. Consequently all children are well supported and sufficiently challenged as they make progress towards the early learning goals.

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 any 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 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):

- make further improvements to the key worker system for the children aged from two to three years
- make further improvements to the system for recording and monitoring the progress of children with learning difficulties or disabilities

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 the organisation of space and resources, so that children are able to move and play freely in all areas (also applies to care)
- provide opportunities for children to use physically challenging apparatus which would further promote their physical development.

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