

St Lukes Pre-School (Rochester)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103846
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
Setting Address	City Way, Rochester, Kent, ME1 2BQ
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Registered person	St Lukes Pre-school (Rochester)
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 Luke's Pre-School (Rochester) opened in 1966 and operates from a community hall attached to St Luke's Church, Rochester. It is managed by a committee of parents and serves the local community. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and on Monday and Tuesday afternoons they open from 12.30 to 15.00 during school term time only. The children use the lawn outside for outdoor play.

There are currently 55 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 48 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven regular members of staff and a one to one worker. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff nurture children's emotional development and are mindful of children's age and stage of maturity. They realise the importance of this because they are caring for some very tall children; staff appreciate the importance of not expecting more from these children than they are capable of managing.

Children are generally learning the importance of good personal hygiene routines, for example, they wash their hands after using the lavatory, use individual disposable towels to dry their hands and are encouraged to blow their noses regularly and dispose of their used tissues. They have been using a communal bowl, however, to wash their hands after art and craft activities which does not protect them from cross-infection in this instance. This is because the children have to be accompanied to the toilets as they are not in the main room.

The staff do not care for children who are contagious ensuring other children are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst attending the group are comforted and made comfortable until their parents are able to collect them.

All staff are trained in first aid; and courses are always arranged for new staff as soon as possible, as a result staff are able to act in the best interest of a child should they have an accident or become ill. Staff record any accidents and any first aid that is administered whilst the children are in their care; parents sign these records ensuring they are well informed about what has happened to their child.

Staff very rarely need to administer any medication; when this is required, they ensure they obtain written parental permission and parents sign the record to make sure they know what has been given.

The pre-school provide a choice of snacks at every session, for example, fruit, vegetables, and plain, sweet biscuits. Staff teach children which foods are most healthy but also wants them to have a healthy attitude toward food and eating. They want them to understand that occasional, sweet treats are okay in moderation. Children have squash or milk to drink. Children do not pour their own drinks at snack time which is not promoting their independence. They can, however, pour themselves a drink of water at any time during the session ensuring children remain hydrated. Children undertake projects that teach them about healthy eating.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are safe and secure; parents and children are greeted cheerfully at the door. The room is well organised and arranged to enable children to access resources easily. There are cosy areas where children can rest and relax. The resources are in good condition and well maintained; all staff know to discard anything that is broken or has become dangerous.

The supervisor and a committee member with health and safety experience undertake a thorough, annual risk assessment. All staff take responsibility for maintaining a safe environment, for example, they ensure any spillages are mopped up quickly. A daily check list helps staff maintain safety standards and ensure all required safety equipment is in place.

Child protection is covered with all staff as part of their induction procedure. All staff undertake child protection training as courses become available. Staff make appropriate enquiries about children who arrive with existing injuries and are clear about the procedures to follow, and who to contact if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children often receive one-to-one attention. They sometimes go to another room where they learn how to use their bodies in an imaginative way, for example by pretending to be a plane or a train. They jump, run, hop and balance improving their spatial awareness. Children really enjoy and benefit from these small group activities. Staff notice an improvement in their physical skills and language development; it encourages them to be active and adopt a healthy lifestyle with plenty of exercise.

All staff have undertaken training to help them deliver an appropriate curriculum for the younger children using the framework Birth to three matters. The pre-school provide parents with information about the framework informing them about how children of this age learn and develop. Children have many opportunities to explore, experiment and discover what they can do with a variety of natural materials. The current theme is, 'Under the Sea'; children make very individual pictures using paint they mix themselves, shells, sand and other art and craft materials. A child shows fascination as the glitter and sand sits on top of the glue and they move it around to see what happens. The good range of craft materials encourages this kind of experimentation working with children's natural curiosity.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff working with funded children have undertaken training to help them use the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage effectively. The pre-school tend to plan around a theme. The plans cover all six learning areas and staff use the stepping stones to address specific areas of learning. Staff know the children well and discuss with one another the areas they are working upon with their key children. Staff write an individual learning plan for all children; their progress is reviewed termly and next steps identified to inform future plans. Whilst staff are aware of children's next steps, the stepping stones in the plans are usually for the group, rather than for individuals; the adjustment to activities to address children's individual next steps is done informally. Children are interested and happily engaged in their activities. All children are suitably challenged; staff ensure that children with additional learning needs are included and are reaching their potential. The adult to child ratio is higher than usual; therefore, children have plenty of support as they learn new skills. Staff interact well with children, they show real interest in what children say and naturally extend their knowledge through interesting conversations. Staff have faith in the children and high expectations of their ability, for example, the songs they sing are quite long with several verses and they frequently organise shows that the children act out to their parents. Children are able to select resources for themselves and work independently.

Children play happily and clearly enjoy all the activities. They are busy and show interest in what they are doing. They confidently finish what they are doing to their own satisfaction and do not feel obliged to rush when it is time to change activities. Children show good levels of concentration, for example, at story time. They are able to share, take turns and co-operate with one another. They are beginning to develop an understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

Children behave well; they are familiar with the routine of the day and consequently the sessions run smoothly.

Staff encourage children to develop a love of reading and books. Children are learning that books are for gathering information as well as for pleasure, because staff use books to support learning themes. Children love rhymes and songs, and join in with familiar stories enthusiastically. Children have regular opportunities to recognise their own names and staff frequently make reference to the sounds different letters make. Many children can write their names or recognisable letters; they sometimes write letters and post them home, and often choose to write on their drawings.

Children are confident at counting and many can competently count beyond ten. They are given many opportunities to recognise different shapes and are learning the correct mathematical names. Children enjoy making jigsaw puzzles and this aids the development of their spatial awareness. Number rhymes and songs introduce children to making simple calculations. Children regularly play with sand and water, giving them the opportunity to measure and explore volume.

Staff invite many interesting people to the pre-school to share their knowledge with the children. Farming world recently came with a young owl chick, a slightly older owl and a fully grown bird demonstrating to children how the birds grow and develop. The staff take lots of pictures to share with parents and make 'talking books' that record what their children say. They have recently made a book to accompany their mini beast topic. The children improve their technology skills by helping to group the photographs on the computer. A parent who is a diver came to the group to show the children his diving equipment; a treasure chest prop was used to encourage role play compounding the children's understanding. Parents visit and share information about their culture; because the children recognise the parents this gives the experience authenticity.

Children frequently play outside in the fresh air. Staff understand that helping children develop their gross motor skills has an impact on skills that require fine motor skills, for instance, hand writing. They help children develop good coordination and body control by jumping, running, crawling and balancing. Children go to another room and are given lots of attention whilst they do this; their sense of achievement is very evident as they learn new physical skills, for example, catching a ball or throwing it through a hoop. Children mould dough and make recognisable, quite intricate models using a variety of hand held tools.

Staff introduce children to classical music and encourage them to use their bodies imaginatively, for example, curling up like a sea snail, when they undertake music and movement activities. Children have easy access to a good range of art and craft materials enabling them to make self chosen projects that allow them to develop their creative and artistic talents. Children explore using all their senses; staff erect a makeshift tent which children use as a sensory room with various fibre optic lights and textured material. Children sing together with enthusiasm and often play with different instruments allowing them to explore tone, rhythm and pitch. Role play is very well supported, staff make this area interesting, and it often reflects the main learning theme, compounding the children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A higher than usual number of staff ensures children receive lots of individual attention; staff support children well when they are learning something new, ensuring their feelings of self

worth are nurtured. Staff greet all parents and children personally exchanging information easily; children come in happily and settle quickly. The mix of children and staff is diverse helping children understand that everyone is different. Staff ensure that children who only attend in the afternoon still have opportunities to do what the morning children have done, especially if it is a particularly popular activity. Children are encouraged to appreciate quiet, tranquil moments. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff like children's activities to be as 'real' as possible, giving the experience authenticity. People from the wider community visit the pre-school to share information about their profession with the children. Firemen and community police officers have visited; they let children wear their hats and use their walkie-talkies.

Children with learning difficulties, disabilities, who speak English as an additional language or who are bi-lingual are very well supported. The pre-school have a strong commitment to inclusion, and do whatever they can to ensure children have the best experience at the group. They undertake relevant training and are identified as an autistic friendly provision. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals; they write individual learning plans, setting achievable targets to enable children to develop and progress at a rate suitable to them.

Children behave well; they understand what is expected of them because rules are fairly and consistently applied by staff. Children are kept busy and amused and therefore, they do not look to find excitement in other ways. Staff manage children's behaviour positively, their age, stage of development and level of understanding are all taken into account. All staff are very kind and patient with the children and nurture their emotional and social development.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are able to take a very active role in their child's early education. They are able to be part of the committee who operate the pre-school and they are very welcome to come in and help on the parent rota. The policies and procedures that include a complaints procedure are always available for parents to read. Staff hold induction days for parents of new children to familiarise them with the organisation of the group. There is a notice board that has information about the Foundation Stage, giving parents a greater understanding of what the children do and how the various activities help their children develop in all six areas of learning. Staff use photos effectively and always have a montage of the most recent activities for parents to view. The children also love to identify themselves and their friends in the photographs. Every term staff review children's individual learning plan and these reports are always available for parents to see. Parents are encouraged to use these records to contribute to their child's assessment records, unfortunately, they rarely add any comments. Parents communicate and exchange information easily with staff; they confirm they are pleased with the service provided and say how much their children like to attend.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Procedures are in place to ensure all staff hold a current criminal records check and are suitable to look after children. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and most hold a relevant qualification. They are encouraged to attend courses and update their training.

Children are well grouped and the key worker system ensures appropriate support and care throughout the day. The pace and routine of the day is good; children are busy and interested in what they are doing. The children have access to a wide range of resources to keep them

amused and aid their development in all areas. The setting meets the needs of the range children for whom it provides.

All mandatory records are kept and confidentiality is observed. The committee and manager believe the staff are their greatest resource; they usually work on a higher staff : child ratio than is required ensuring good support for the children.

The leadership and management are good. The chair of the committee has a childcare background and therefore has a good understanding of the day to day challenges that staff face. They employ an admin assistant who helps organise much of the paperwork. The manager takes responsibility for the day to day management of the pre-school but feels strongly that all staff members contribute to the effectiveness of the provision. Staff meetings are held each fortnight; this is how staff exchange information about their key children and the curriculum, ensuring all staff are aware of the areas of learning each child is concentrating upon. They evaluate the service they provide and can identify strengths and weaknesses, for example, the committee and the manager both feel the policies and procedures require updating.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three recommendations were made that relate to Standard 2, 13 and 14. Staff were asked to ensure written notification is sent to Ofsted, regarding the transfer of registration to the committee; ensure medication records meet with requirements; and to update child protection training to current requirements.

The manager and committee chair person both understand their duty to inform Ofsted of any significant changes; medication records include all the required information, however, there are several entries to a page which means observing confidentiality is difficult; staff have updated their child protection training.

At the last education inspection several recommendations were made. Staff were asked to provide children with a wide variety of art materials in order to encourage them to initiate their own learning and express their own ideas; ensure that the older children have opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas at story and discussion times; use daily routines to provide opportunities for children to compare numbers and to solve simple problems and to give more priority in the programme to the systematic teaching of the sounds that letters make.

Children can now self select a good range of art and craft materials; the art activities they undertake are very individually styled and enables children to express themselves creatively. Staff regularly make reference to the sound different letters make, and children often contribute thoughts and ideas at story time. Children undertake simple calculations whilst singing number rhymes and they count every day at snack time the number of children present.

All the changes the staff have made has improved the outcomes for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 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.

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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):

- consider how children can wash their hands after art and craft activities without using a communal bowl to help prevent cross infection; further encourage children's independence at snack time by enabling them to pour their own drinks
- review and update the policies and procedures to reflect the service provided accurately.

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 formalising the system to include children's individual next steps in the plans

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