

Swan Street Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127667
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Inspector	Jane Wakelen
Setting Address	61 Swan Street, West Malling, Kent, ME19 6LW
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Registered person	West Malling Baptist Church
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Swan street pre-school has been registered since 1997. It operates from the Baptist Church building in the village centre of West Malling, Kent. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five mornings from 09:15 to 12:00 and 13:00 to 15:15 for three afternoons each week in term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed garden.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 24 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications and one will start a course in September, 2007. There is on-going support from the Early Years Advisory Teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children gain a good understanding about personal care routines, such as washing their hands after using the toilet or before eating their lunch and snacks. Children are familiar with these routines and are able to be independent using the toilets, with many children washing their hands without being reminded. Children are able to use tissues freely and put these in the bin, understanding why this is important. Good hygiene practices are followed by staff, such as using appropriate cloths and mops to clean spillages and prepare surfaces for eating, therefore preventing cross infection. All staff hold current first aid certificates and renew them every three years to ensure they have an up-to-date knowledge of first aid, thereby fully promoting children's health needs. A first aid box is available, but used by other groups during weekends. The monitoring of this is soon to be added to the daily risk assessment to ensure the contents are complete. Staff are aware of the need to protect children whilst playing outside in the sun and use gazebos to provide shade, whilst ensuring children have hats and sun cream. However, at present the procedures for children attending full day care do not include permission from parents regarding re-applying sun cream.

Children gain an excellent understanding about healthy eating as they have a wide selection of fruit, vegetables and other foods to choose from. Staff are very good at talking to children about eating healthily and use the social occasion of the snack bar to discuss where food grows and how, such as tomatoes on plants and apples from trees. Children use bowls to select their chosen snacks and independently pour their drinks of water or milk. When outside, children have access to drinking water at all times to help themselves, with staff reminding children about drinking regularly to prevent dehydration. All staff are fully aware of any allergies or food intolerances of the children, working in partnership with parents. Some children stay all day and bring their packed lunch with them. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy options and staff ensure children eat their sandwiches and fruit before eating any treats, such as biscuits.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to participate in large physical play outside in the garden. They benefit from a secure, enclosed garden with a large lawn and flower borders which provides a relaxing, homely setting. Staff promote outdoor play, extending activities from indoors to outdoors, such as musical instruments, drawing and books. Children develop skills in running, balancing and learn to use pedals on the tricycles. They climb on the climbing frame and up the ladder on the slide and enjoy sharing a swing-boat with a friend. Children are able to dig in the mud patch and play with logs made from the fallen apple tree, enjoying the natural resources around them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a safe, welcoming environment which promotes children's independent play. Children are able to move freely between the two play rooms, or between outside and one playroom, depending on staff ratios, choosing activities from those selected by staff or themselves. A long term risk assessment is recorded in writing and updated on a yearly basis. A short term risk assessment is carried out, but not recorded at present.

Children have access to a good range of safe, well maintained resources and activities that are age and stage related. Some equipment is stored in storage containers accessible to children,

within the play rooms to self-select, with other equipment being stored in the adjoining garage, to provide a greater selection which is selected by the staff. Play equipment is moved around and changed, such as the role play area to ensure children's interest is maintained and engaged. The book area is not fully developed, but staff move this around and have not yet decided the best place to ensure full use is made of this facility.

Children learn about keeping themselves safe, with support from staff, such as not running indoors and being reminded to take care when using the scissors. They learn about taking turns in the garden, as small groups are taken out at a time to ensure the correct staff ratio is maintained and about keeping each other safe for example, when playing with the building bricks, to ensure it does not topple on anyone when they are building a tower. Regular fire drills are practised to ensure all children understand the procedures to evacuate the building. These drills are recorded to allow staff the opportunity to record any concerns with the procedures or relevant information. Staff have a good understanding about promoting children's safety and have thorough systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of the children.

All staff have a sound understanding about safeguarding children and follow the procedures set up by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The policy is at present being updated to include all necessary information which is available to parents with all other policies for the pre-school.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children have access to a good range of equipment, resources and activities to support their development. They choose from the activities selected by adults or can self-select from the storage drawers. Children receive good levels of interaction from staff to engage them in stimulating and interesting activities, although areas such as creative choices using paints or collage is on an adult-led basis. Children move around the room selecting different activities, with older children on occasions finding activities do not always provide sufficient challenge. All children participate well in group activities and discussions and show confidence when acting out the familiar story, 'Goldilocks and the three bears', in front of their peers. Staff offer plenty of praise and encouragement to children and most staff use good questioning skills to encourage children to think and solve problems. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to make observations on the younger children and list different aspects on the planning, although it is not clear how these link to the observations.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are keen and motivated individuals who provide high levels of interaction with the children, building good relationships and providing interesting activities, linked to simple topics, such as familiar stories and books. Short term plans are implemented on a daily basis and records aspects from the six areas of learning and Birth to three matters. Activities are recorded for the day, including the continuous provision, such as the self-registration session. However, there are not clear links between the development records and where children are in their learning, children's next steps and the planning to provide a clear learning intention for the activities, including how activities will be differentiated. There are no long term plans in place which prevent a way of ensuring that all six areas are given equal emphasis and that all aspects of learning within the six areas are covered regularly and frequently.

Children are motivated and keen learners who show interest and excitement when shown new activities, such as playing with gloop and making hobby horses. Staff interact well with the children offering lots of support and praise, encouraging children to become independent learners. Children learn to take turns, such as when riding the tricycles and share the playdough, when playing in the role play area. Children take pride in their work, such as showing adults their picture they have drawn or castle they have coloured in. Children show good concentration when listening to group stories and increasing independence in their personal skills and selecting and carrying out activities. They are beginning to recognize their names and several children are able to write their name from memory or use their name cards to copy, gaining control with the pencil. Children have regular opportunities to make marks and understand that print carries meaning, such as one child who wrote her own story using marks and read this to a small group of children and an adult. Some older children can match letters in their name to words around the room, although many children do not link sounds to letters.

Children have lots of opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them. They show an interest in sensory materials, such as the gloop and mud patch outside and enjoy using the sawn logs in the garden to form part of their games, such as firework night. Children are encouraged to observe wildlife and record their findings, such as the different birds that visit the bird feeders in the garden. They have opportunities to learn about different cultural celebrations, such as Chinese new year and enjoy tasting the different foods. Children use a variety of objects, gaining an understanding of how they work, such as the torches and binoculars and use a selection of construction toys, learning to build and join. Children are beginning to use different objects in their role play such as the keyboard and telephone. They enjoy acting out familiar roles from home, such as making the birthday cake and then blowing out the candles. Children show a good sense of recall as they act out familiar stories in the role play area, and pretend to cook the porridge. Children enjoy using paint and collage materials to produce end products, but have limited opportunities to self-select collage or painting activities as these are not a daily resource.

Children are beginning to use mathematical language in their play, such as talking about the small pencil and the large bear. They have a good understanding about big, medium and small through topic work on 'goldilocks and the three bears' and match and compare different sized objects. Children recognize many two dimensional shapes, but are not encouraged to name three dimensional, such as the tomato is round, not a sphere. Children count in practical opportunities throughout the day, such as counting children that are present, candles on the cake and numbers on the castle. However, several children could not name the numbers by sight, only by counting, although they recognize numbers familiar to them, such as their age. Children have many opportunities to practice their fine physical skills, using pencils, cutting with scissors and using glue sticks. Children enjoy completing puzzles and building with the bricks, showing control and precision.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children settle well within the nursery because staff treat all children with respect and equal concern. The pre-school is owned by the church and an emphasis on Christian belief is promoted, including saying a prayer at the end of the session. The inclusive and welcoming environment is promoted with effective systems in place to support those with learning difficulties, thus promoting the needs of all children with good liaison between the keyworker, special educational needs co-ordinator and parents. Children learn about families and the differences and similarities between themselves and others through activities and using a range of resources that provide

a positive image of diversity. Posters around the pre-school reflect different cultures and several posters are written in many languages, showing children that print comes in different forms, depending on which language you speak.

Children behave well within the nursery and are well supported by staff to help them to learn to share and take turns, whilst playing. Children turn to adults to help them solve disputes, such as when a child snatches a toy or to help when putting on an apron, building good relationships and helping children feel secure whilst in the setting. Adults help children to negotiate and provide good role models for children to follow, which supports their understanding about the rules within the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership of parents receiving funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents receive information in the prospectus regarding the six areas of learning for the foundation stage. However, there is very little information recorded to inform parents about the development records and observations on their child and how this is used to inform the planning to meet their individual needs. Parents receive regular newsletters informing them about future events and issues relating to their child and offers them opportunities to view their children's records. However, as this is not a formal arrangement, many parents do not ask to see the records and therefore do not contribute to the assessment process. Parents are very happy with the service the nursery provides and many have returned with siblings because they value the care the staff offer the children. Parents are occasionally asked to comment on the provision through monitoring forms and staff implement ideas where possible, such as the wearing of name badges for the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the dedicated team of staff who work well as a team. All staff hold a relevant early years qualification or are working towards one. Staff are encouraged to attend training courses that are offered from the early years, including basic food hygiene, first aid and child development, to update their skills and knowledge.

Most required documentation is in place, although some information needs adding on the registration form, to ensure all information is obtained to meet the children's individual needs. Consent forms from parents has been obtained, although permission to apply sun cream is necessary as the group provides full day care. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. Staff and children benefit from committed and keen supervisors who work hard to establish a happy team to provide an efficient and effective service. Staff meet regularly for meetings to discuss work processes and any concerns or ideas for activities. All staff undertake observations of the children in their care and plan children's next steps. One of the supervisors then devises the plans using the next steps. However, there is not a clear link from the next steps and planning is only short term and does not contain sufficient information to ensure all activities have a clear learning intention. The weakness in the planning results in some areas not being given equal emphasis. Parents are not invited to view their children's assessment records on a formal basis and therefore do not contribute to the assessment procedure.

Recruitment procedures are in place to ensure staff hold a current police check but references are not taken up and procedures to ensure staff remain suitable to work with children are not in place. At present an appraisal system has not been implemented to monitor the staff's strengths, areas to improve and training requirements.

Improvements since the last inspection

The setting had two recommendations from the previous care inspection which were to monitor risk assessments on the premises, identifying action(s) to be taken to minimise identified risks and ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Children now benefit from a yearly risk assessment in writing that ensures staff are aware of hazards within the setting and a daily risk assessment, although this is not recorded at present. All records are kept confidential and new systems have been implemented to record confidential information, to ensure only the parent of the child has access to the particular entry.

The setting had two key issues for the improvement of nursery education which were to extend the use of stepping stones and early learning goals to refer to children's observations, to show their current stage of development. Review the planning of single stepping stones to ensure all children's differing development stages are catered for and to extend opportunities for children to count and use numerals practically and for a purpose and introduce and implement regular opportunities for all children to experience other peoples culture and ethnicity positively.

The planning remains a recommendation from this inspection. Children now have opportunities to count during the session in practical ways, and write and recognize the number of children attending at the registration session. Children also experience different cultures and ethnicity through a range of provision, resources and simple topic work.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider of 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 satisfactory.

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):

- ensure written consent and information is obtained from parents regarding aspects of care, such as the application of sun cream and religion and language spoken at home
- implement rigorous vetting and recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with young children

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):

- continue to develop a method of planning to include long term plans to ensure all six areas of learning are given equal emphasis, using all the aspects. Provide a clear learning intention for the activities and show differentiation to meet children's individual needs
- extend children's development records to clearly indicate where children are in their learning and encourage parents to be involved in children's learning by contributing to the assessment record

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