



St Francis Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY301961
Inspection date	18 May 2005
Inspector	Anne Munro
Setting Address	Blackfield Infant School, Hampton Lane, Blackfield, Southampton, Hampshire, SO45 1XA
Telephone number	02380 899 514
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Registered person	St Francis Pre-School
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Francis Preschool has been operating at Blackfield Infant School since 2005. The preschool has sole use of two adjoining classrooms with their own garden and entrance, and shares other facilities within the school. The preschool is a community group managed by a voluntary committee of parents. Children attend from a wide catchment area.

The setting is registered to accept up to 24 children aged from 2 to under 5 years.

There are currently 53 children on roll, including 52 in receipt of nursery funding. The preschool supports a small number of children with special needs.

The preschool opens five days a week in term time. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are eight members of staff working with the children, including four with early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Hampshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to wash their hands and are developing good levels of independence in their personal care. They are protected from cross infection by the staff's careful attention to good hygiene procedures. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure that sick or injured children are cared for effectively, and staff are conscientious about maintaining accurate records. Children learn about a healthy diet as they eat fruit and drink milk at snack time. Staff ensure that they gather information from parents in order to meet the needs of children with allergies or special dietary requirements.

Children enjoy healthy outdoor play daily, developing their physical skills. They develop good spatial awareness steering scooters around the outside area and playing active games indoors. They use large apparatus such as tunnel, climbing frame and trampoline to develop physical control and co-ordination, and practise skills with small equipment such as balls, ropes and skittles. They enjoy a good range of activities that promote manipulative skills, including using pencils and scissors and playing with construction toys and playdough.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming safe environment, as staff carry out regular checks and have taken steps to minimise risks. Staff and parents are aware of clear policies and procedures that support children's safety, but there is no written procedure to be followed if a child is not collected on time. Children practise emergency evacuation regularly with the rest of the school. They have safe and easy access to toys and equipment, stored in child height units and well-maintained. They have plenty of space to play and move confidently around the premises. They are cared for by adults who have been suitably vetted and have a good range of knowledge and skills, including first aid qualification and knowledge of child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children come happily into preschool and are confident in making choices from a good range of toys and activities. They are able to play independently and also play well alongside others.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children can sit quietly and listen when appropriate and are confident in responding to questions. They relate well to staff and other children and become confident speakers as staff encourage conversation. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. They learn to recognise their written names and some can write their names. Older children can count and recognise numerals but there is little opportunity to use number in daily routines. They learn about sound and rhythm with percussion instruments, and enjoy exploring colour and texture in interesting art activities. Children design and build with a good range of construction toys and make good use of a computer to support their learning. Overall children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Staff are developing their knowledge of the early learning goals and plan a good range of activities to cover the six areas of learning. Less experienced staff are not yet sufficiently secure in their understanding of the stepping stones to be able to make good use of opportunities arising to promote children's individual development. Staff generally use appropriate teaching methods and make good use of available space to create a stimulating environment. They keep accurate records of children's progress which they discuss regularly with parents. Children with special needs are very well supported, as staff liaise closely with parents and with other professionals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show very good levels of confidence and independence. They are relaxed and comfortable with staff and are familiar with routines and expectations. They talk about their homes and families and learn about the local community from visitors to the group. They learn to share and take turns with other children and are generally caring and protective towards younger children. Children with special needs are included and where necessary extra staffing is provided to meet their needs. Children play with a range of resources that provide positive images of other cultures. Staff use praise and encouragement to promote children's self-esteem and to re-inforce their good behaviour. Staff foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good information about the setting and about activities and events. They are encouraged to participate in their children's learning. Staff provide them with ideas for promoting learning at home and invite them to contribute resources and expertise. Parents serve on the management

committee and provide practical help in sessions. Staff encourage communication, providing verbal feedback about achievements daily, and half-termly written reports. Parents are regularly invited in to discuss and contribute to their children's records of achievement.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from good levels of supervision as high staffing ratios are maintained. The committee has effective employment and recruitment procedures in place and employs an administrator to ensure the smooth running of the group. Formal induction and appraisal systems are in place for staff, enabling training needs to be identified and staff are supported in accessing appropriate courses when they are available. Clear policies and procedures are in place to protect children's welfare and staff maintain accurate records to ensure that they are able to meet children's needs. They are very conscientious about maintaining confidentiality and store documentation securely.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The active management committee provides practical help as well as taking responsibility for funding and ensuring that the group is well resourced. Space in the setting is well organised and equipment is stored in accessible shelving, enabling children to make choices and develop good levels of independence. However, the organisation of activities such as preparing for outside play, snack time and handwashing results in children spending too much time waiting and distracting others. The supervisor provides strong leadership, ensuring that staff are effectively deployed. She involves all staff in the planning of a good range of activities and continues to monitor and evaluate practice. She is aware of strengths and weaknesses and is planning amendments to documentation to improve planning to meet children's individual needs. The supervisor and committee are also monitoring the use of the rooms in order to plan effectively for a future move to new premises. Overall the provision generally meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- review the organisation of sessions to minimise the time children spend waiting and ensure that they are able to concentrate without distraction.
- produce written procedures to be followed should a child fail to be collected

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):

- increase the staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals so that they can make good use of the activities provided to promote children's individual learning
- provide children with more opportunities to use counting and number throughout their daily routines

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