

St Andrews Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	306491
Inspection date	01 May 2007
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott
Setting Address	St Andrews Primary School, Townfield Lane, Bebington, Wirral, CH63 7NL
Telephone number	0151 643 9591
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Registered person	StAndrews Playgroup Committee
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Andrew's Pre-School Playgroup has been registered since 1993 and is managed by a committee. The group operates from a self-contained room, linked to St. Andrew's C of E Primary School, which is situated in Bebington, on the Wirral peninsular. The children have access to a main playroom, an entrance area containing two toilets and an outside play area. The pre-school serves the local residential community.

The group is registered to provide a service for 22 children aged from two years to five years. There are currently 47 children on roll, of which 44 are funded three and four-year-old children. The pre-school supports several children with learning difficulties and three children who have English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 and again each afternoon from 12.30 until 15.00. There are five staff of whom all are qualified with either a National Vocational Qualification in Child Care and Education or a teaching qualification. All members of staff have a current paediatric first aid certificate. The pre-school has the

support of a Foundation Stage consultant to develop 'Birth to three matters' and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children confidently talk about how to keep healthy and recognise the importance of washing hands prior to eating and after visiting the toilet. Children follow excellent personal hygiene routines, helping to prevent the spread of infection. They independently wash their hands without needing reminding. Children blow their own noses and dispose of the tissues carefully. Their individual toileting requirements are very well met and staff respect the children's privacy when changing them.

Children learn how to keep healthy through very interesting projects and the way this is skilfully woven into every aspect of the children's day. Children's well-being is extremely well protected by the comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures which are carried out effectively by staff and the high level of staff with first aid training. All accidents are appropriately recorded and shared with parents. Children's medical needs and special dietary requirements are sensitively met as staff adopt a proactive approach. There is a resource kit which has been developed by staff that goes everywhere the children go. It contains items including foil blankets to keep children warm, following a previous incident at the pre-school when children were evacuated after a gas leak and did not have their coats.

Children's health and well-being is promoted as they eat their snack. Children chat socially together and learn to care for each other, enjoying serving and pouring their own drinks. They have an excellent choice of fresh fruit and vegetables, such as guava, mango, kiwi, Sharon fruit and pomegranates. Children can choose between milk and water, using a token system. They sing a song each day before snack time, reminding them about the value of healthy food and drink. They look at pictures displayed around the walls and have been rewarded with certificates from the Life Education Centre for completing a project about caring for their bodies.

Children recognise the benefits of exercise and enjoy daily opportunities to participate in activities developing their coordination and skills. This helps them to have positive attitudes to physical activity as part of developing a healthy lifestyle. The children enjoy an excellent range of physical activities each session. They eagerly join in the varied and innovative activities that develop their climbing, sliding, riding and balancing skills as they access the equipment available. Most children are competent in steering and are able to prevent collision. Children are becoming increasingly aware of parts of their bodies. They develop upper body strength as they pull themselves up onto the climbing frame and roll over its bars. Their hearts beat faster and they are made aware of this as they pedal their tricycles frantically and engage in music and movement sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very safe and happy in the pre-school environment which is superbly well organised, to maximise children's enjoyment and learning and to foster their independence. All families are individually greeted each morning in a warm comfortable setting where children see their

work beautifully displayed on the walls. The busy, interesting environment has been well prepared in advance so that no time is wasted and children can go directly to play.

Children access the designated areas freely with close, age appropriate supervision and excellent support from the staff. Children move very confidently around the environment, both inside and outside. They make independent choices from activities available. Some children make their own collage pictures relating to a recent story about a teddy bear who went to the moon in a rocket. They freely access a wealth of design materials from the creative workshop and use lots of glue. Others lie on the floor sustaining their interest in the road track for long periods. All children are busy and engrossed throughout the whole session.

Children's safety is of paramount importance to the staff. The excellent arrival and departure procedures ensure all the children are fully accounted for at all times and are unable to leave the premises unnoticed by staff. Access to the premises is fully monitored and all staff, visitors and children attending are recorded daily. Children are taught using excellent methods about how to keep themselves safe. For example, staff have taken photographs of the children playing on the new slide and climbing frame in the outdoor area. These photographs have been formed into a poster which is displayed on the door to the outside area. As children line up to go outside a member of staff goes through the poster with the children to make absolutely certain they all know how to play safely and have fun on the equipment. Staff ensure that the toys and activities comply with high safety standards and are appropriate for the age and stage of development of each child to use. Children are extremely safe and secure on the premises and on outings through the rigorous risk assessment and vigilance of staff. However, this is balanced with opportunities for children to take risks, to gain a sense of danger and to learn how to keep themselves safe. Staff allow children to use a variety of tools but supervise their use well.

Children are further protected because staff have an in-depth knowledge of child protection, they are aware of their roles and responsibilities and how to implement the pre-school and local safeguarding procedures. All staff, children and visitors at the nursery are recorded. Detailed policies for the collection and non collection of children are in place and staff ensure they are upheld.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Warm and caring relationships are formed between children and staff as they talk and laugh together whilst playing. Children are happy and enjoy themselves in the vibrant pre-school environment that the staff create each session. They make excellent progress because all staff are highly skilled, have a good understanding of early years guidance, such as 'Birth to three matters' framework and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Children are confident and enjoy making choices about their experiences in selecting their own materials. Young children delight in taking an active part in the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and are spellbound when they are told it is Beat Baby's birthday and that they have some presents for him.

Children's creative development is promoted through activities, such as junk modelling, listening to reflective music, acting and singing. Staff cleverly signpost different parts of the session, by inventing songs to tell children what is going to happen next without them having to stop and be directed. All children have many opportunities to participate in a wealth of exciting activities and projects. They plant beans, write letters, make tickets for the bus they have created, and investigate what happens to ice as it melts.

Staff have an excellent understanding of how children gain independence. They offer practical solutions to difficult tasks which are achievable for the children. For example, if you put your coat on the floor upside down, push your arms through the arm holes and swing the coat over your head, hey presto it is on the right way round. Staff place little crosses on the insides of children's pumps. When they get ready to go to the hall for physical education, they have to remember to make the little crosses kiss each other, that way their pumps will be on the right feet. They also know that buckles never kiss!

Nursery education

Quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent grasp of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They use children's interests and their knowledge of each child's progress to effectively plan an extensive range of stimulating activities which cover all aspects of the curriculum. Children are challenged by the detailed planning and staffs' high expectations of what they can achieve. Staff observe and record children's play and achievements. They identify the next steps in children's learning and weave this knowledge into their weekly plans. Staff use lots of effective teaching methods and tools, for example, the organisation of the play areas reflect the six areas of learning. Children are making tremendous progress because staff support children in their activities and help them persist and achieve.

The competent staff skilfully extend the children's learning and development through the use of open questions developing the children's individual thinking and prediction skills in a fun way. For example, what do they think happened to the giant after the beanstalk was chopped down and he fell on the floor. Children's concentration is extraordinary. They are transfixed to their story as it is acted out by their friends, with the help of finger puppets. They persevere with craft activities for long periods and make sure that their picture is completed to their satisfaction before they leave the workshop area. They are confident and call to each other to join in imaginary games in the role play area. Most children play harmoniously and recognise when they have hurt or upset someone. They make amends by saying sorry or making a card. They care about each other and when one child can not find any more ice lolly sticks to create her picture, another takes her to the end of the table and shows her the drawer where she can find some more.

Children have excellent communication skills and their broad vocabulary allows them to express their views and emotions well. They negotiate their plans effectively during role play. They enjoy sharing books and explain the stories by confidently describing what is happening in the pictures. They are able to choose books to take home on loan. They link sounds with letters as they find their names at the snack table and look for matching pairs in a card game. Some children have discovered rhyme and have great fun making up rhymes whenever a situation inspires them. They confidently attempt to write their name on their work, many succeeding and manipulate objects, such as glue spreaders, scissors, pens and pencils.

Children are taught about numbers and simple mathematical concepts in many activities and daily routines. Children's counting and recognition of written numbers is very secure. Many children recognise numbers up to 10 and above. They sing the 'number rumba' song regularly to help with this. At snack time they calculate how many cartons of milk they will need by counting the number of white tokens children are holding up at their table. They have opportunities for weighing and measuring in the water play and try to guess what the birthday present for Beat Baby is, by deciding if it is heavy or light.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing. They learn about modern technology as well as the natural world. They are proficient in their use of the mouse and enjoy using computer programs to enrich their learning. There is a strong emphasis on promoting equal opportunities in the setting and children are able to gain many experiences of different cultures and festivals, as well as gaining an awareness of differing abilities.

Creativity is strongly encouraged as children are given access to an extensive range of media, including clay and have opportunities to play unusual instruments during their topic of near and far away. Role play is a favourite with the children and many hours are spent re-enacting stories they have been told.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are extremely happy and settled and enjoy close, trusting relationships with the staff. This is greatly helped by the excellent steps staff take to help new children get to know them and the pre-school environment before parting from their parents. Children are extremely confident and show exceptional self-esteem, responding well to praise and encouragement. Staff ensure that children feel valued by encouraging them to admire each other's work at the end of the session whilst singing the 'What a star' song. They offer praise for their wonderful achievements and give them encouragement to try out new things. Children are positively encouraged to care for and help one another. Through the positive example provided by staff, children learn to value difference. They play with readily accessible resources reflecting positive images of diversity and disability and learn about the cultures of others. They cover all sorts of topics and celebrations, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Every effort is made by staff to give them as full a picture as possible of each event and depict it in all areas of their learning so it is meaningful for them. For Chinese New Year they make a dragon from cardboard boxes and material. They go inside the dragon and dance outside in the play area. Children fundraise for other children in Africa, who have to go a long way to collect water as they do not have any in their taps. They want to raise money so they can help to buy a water tap for them. The staff plan an excellent activity to help this to come to life. Children each have a baby doll strapped to their back in a blanket and they carry buckets of water round and round outside to get a feeling of what it would be like for the people who live in Africa.

The pre-school supports several children with learning difficulties and the excellent systems in place enable children to thrive. Staff attend specific training and have extensive knowledge, expertise and skills to support the families in all areas of the child's care and learning. They work hard to establish trusting relationships and enable the children to participate in all activities, making adjustments whenever necessary.

Children have excellent relationships with each other and the staff, and their behaviour is exemplary. Staff have high expectations of them and set consistent boundaries. Children learn about sharing and valuing others from the excellent role models provided by the staff. They use puppets and empathy dolls who act out scenarios to help children to think about which is the right thing to do. Children learn right from wrong through gentle reminders such as, saying 'sorry' when you have upset someone or making a 'sorry' card. Children are rewarded with smiley face hand stamps and stickers for kind actions and listening well at story time.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. The relaxed relationship between parents and staff provides emotional security and reassurance to children. The staff team have prepared a wealth

of excellent information including power point presentations, parents evenings, workshops and digital video disc (DVD) footage, to keep them well informed about daily issues, planning, topics for activities, and the six areas of learning. They receive regular newsletters, photographs of the children, parent handbooks and verbal updates. Staff strive to share their knowledge with parents so they can fully appreciate that children's play is their work. Parents find the staff very friendly, approachable, helpful and welcoming. They feel able to discuss any concerns with staff and are very confident that their children will be managed appropriately. Parents praise the activity plans that they are given and the suggestions for how they can follow up what the children are learning. They say that they really help them understand and contribute to their children's learning. Staff work together with parents to assess children's progress and have regular meetings to recognise the child's achievements and progress and plan their next steps.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children are cared for by a dedicated, well organised, skilful team who meet their individual needs superbly. There are rigorous recruitment procedures and a thorough induction, which ensures children are always safe and provided with good quality stimulating resources and activities on a daily basis. Staff are professional in their approach and this is reflected in all aspects of the setting; in the very well organised child care areas; in safety measures taken and in the range of high quality resources and equipment provided. Children grow in confidence and in enthusiasm for learning through the high quality of teaching.

The staff team have high standards and are very secure in their knowledge and understanding of frameworks, such as the Foundation Stage and 'Birth To Three Matters'. This underpins their outstanding practice. Children are making excellent progress in all areas of learning. High importance is placed on training and development and the management committee support and encourage staff to fully access this. This ensures that staff develop to their full potential and contribute to promoting positive outcomes for children. Clear, comprehensive documentation and robust monitoring and evaluation systems in are place to ensure that children's health, safety and well-being is safeguarded. Superb links are made with other agencies, which further enhances the provision.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The team are led by a genuine, extremely effective manager whose infectious enthusiasm ensures that smooth, consistent and outstanding practices are in place for the benefit of all the children and their parents. As a team they provide a clear vision for the pre-school and are enthusiastic and motivated to constantly improve the environment and their provision. By seeking the views of parents and regularly reviewing practice they are committed to moving forward. Their attitude to continual improvement and development helps all to contribute and be a part of the setting and successfully promotes positive outcomes for children. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to review the child protection procedure and the complaints procedure. All the setting's procedures have been reviewed since the last inspection and meet with regulatory requirements. This has a positive effect on children as they underpin the smooth running of the pre-school. The provider was also asked to provide appropriate crockery at snack time. Children are now provided with plates for their snack.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to increase opportunities for the younger child to select their own learning materials and work independently. This issue has been addressed as the setting has changed from a more structured provision, to using the continuous play model. All children now select from a wide range available and can work independently. The provider was also required to use the daily routines and practical activities to develop the children's ability to calculate and consolidate their understanding of mathematics. Again continuous provision has addressed the issues and staff continually harness daily routines and use them to promote the six areas of learning effectively. The last key issue was for the provider to increase opportunities for children to select their own tools and to use their imagination in art and design. This has been addressed as the children have the freedom to use their imagination throughout the session in the creative workshop. This has been a big area of development for the setting and children to design, construct and create with their own tools and have very individual outcomes.

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 complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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