

# St Annes RC School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	309462
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Lee
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Annes RC Primary School, Aughton Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 3LQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 574 697
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	St Anne's Catholic School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Annes RC School Playgroup opened in 1992. It operates from one room in a purpose-built building situated in the school grounds. The group is self-contained and has its own adjacent outdoor area as well as use of the school grounds and hall. The group is located close to Ormskirk town centre and serves the local area as the children tend to proceed to the school.

There are currently 42 children aged from three to five years on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. This includes 41 funded children. The group has systems in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 08.55 until 15.25.

Three full time and two part time staff work with the children. All of the staff have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority support teacher. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and completed their accreditation scheme in 2002. The group also holds Lead Practitioner status with the local authority and they are working towards the Lancashire Quality Assurance Award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and hygienic environment where staff take good steps to keep them free from infection and cross-contamination. They use anti-bacterial spray to wipe tables and worktops, change the sand and water trays and clear up spillages regularly. Children learn about good personal hygiene because they are encouraged to wash their hands appropriately and take part in arts and craft activities and projects which help them to understand about healthy eating and care of the teeth. Their independence is promoted because they go to the toilet by themselves, wash their hands and dry them on paper towels to prevent cross-contamination.

The staff are trained in first aid, there is a fully stocked first aid box and all of the necessary documentation is in place to ensure that children are safeguarded in the event of accidental injury or sickness. Staff respond quickly and sympathetically when children are hurt to ensure that they are reassured and made comfortable.

Parents provide a packed lunch for children and these are stored hygienically in the fridge. Healthy snacks of fruit and drinks of milk or water are provided during each session. However, children do not have free access to water so that they can pour themselves a drink at any time.

Children have many opportunities to develop their physical skills. They play outside using a good variety of equipment, such as balls, skipping ropes, stilts and slides. Children also ride wheeled toys, run races and dig in the sand. Indoors they dance and exercise to music and take part in active parachute games and circle games. There are also daily opportunities for children to practise their small motor skills when painting, drawing, threading and when manipulating dough, small world toys and construction equipment.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are secure in the setting because staff make sure that the front door is always locked and children are supervised closely at all times. Parents must ring the bell for access into the building and there are collection procedures in place to ensure that children never leave the premises with unauthorised people. However, although staff meet all visitors at the entrance, access is not fully monitored because visitors are not always asked to sign the visitors book.

Staff greet children warmly and the playroom is brightly decorated with photographs, colourful posters and examples of the children's work, so that they feel that they belong in the setting. Children are cared for in one main playroom which is well organised to allow them free access to many of the toys and activities. They can choose from a wide range of interesting and stimulating resources including sand, water, dressing up clothes, construction items, small world toys and dough. There is also a well equipped home corner, book area and computer table. The small world toys, puzzles and table top toys are stored in low-level boxes which are well labelled in words and pictures so that children can make choices about what they do in the setting.

Staff follow the comprehensive health and safety procedures to ensure that the premises and the outdoor play areas are safe and checked for hazards each day. All of the necessary safety equipment, such as fire fighting equipment, electric socket covers and kitchen cupboard locks, is in place to minimise the risk of accidental injury to children. There are regular fire drills to

ensure that children can safeguard themselves in an emergency. Children are closely supervised at all times and staff remind them not to run in the playroom and to fasten their shoe laces, so that they do not trip up and hurt themselves.

There are child protection procedures in place and staff receive training to enable them to safeguard children in their care. They know their roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting children and all of the emergency telephone numbers are available to enable staff to seek help and advice if an issue arises.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The well qualified and experienced staff are kind, friendly and approachable, so that children settle in quickly and feel relaxed and comfortable in the setting. They devise an interesting and stimulating range of activities for children which helps them to make progress in all area of development. One of the main aims of the group is to make the transition to school easier by helping children to become more independent and gradually introducing them to the school environment.

Children are lively and confident. They form friendships with one another and enjoy playing imaginatively in the home corner, digging in the sand and cooperating together to build structures with the large wooden blocks. Staff talk to the children, listen to their ideas and help them to extend their play and vocabulary. Children are very relaxed in the setting and the staff respond quickly to their needs. For example, when children are upset or hurt the staff give them a hug or a cuddle to provide reassurance and comfort. There is very friendly, cheerful atmosphere in the group and children are well behaved and well occupied.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good and staff use appropriate assessment methods to monitor the children's development. Staff have an understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are happy and interested as they confidently explore their environment and make choices about what to do in the setting. Their independence is promoted because they are encouraged to dress themselves, help tidy away the toys, pour their own drinks and go to the toilet by themselves. The key worker system helps staff to develop close relationships with the children and this promotes their self-esteem and enables them to settle in quickly and feel safe and secure in the group. Staff talk to the children, listen carefully and intervene appropriately to challenge them to think and extend their play and learning. The space, resources and time are well organised to support children's play and development.

Children show curiosity and express their feelings when cheering one another as they practise running races for the school sports day. They enthusiastically take part in group activities such as singing and story time and staff help them to understand about feelings during group discussions, and with the help of books. There is a friendly, lively atmosphere in the group and the children are well behaved and cooperative. The staff act as good role models and treat the children with kindness and respect. Children form close friendships with one another and they enjoy playing imaginative games together in the home corner and with the construction and small world toys. They show helpfulness and consideration when they help each other to pour drinks at snack time.

Children communicate well because staff engage them in purposeful conversation when they ask them what they have been doing at home or on their holidays. The staff read stories and encourage the children to sing songs from memory. There is a wide selection of books for enjoyment and for reference. For example, they listen to a story about a tadpole which develops into a frog and this reinforces their topic about frogs. Staff also take opportunities to introduce the children to new vocabulary during story time. There are many examples of writing on display so that children become familiar with the written word. Areas for play and boxes of toys are labelled and children practise their mark making skills using a wide range of writing materials. Staff also encourage children to make marks with their hands, using shaving foam or body lotion on the perspex painting easels. Children are given a clipboard and pen in order to design their own building before constructing it with the large blocks. Children recognise their own names on a wall chart and can pick out their name from a pile of name cards.

There are few examples of numbers in the wall displays to help children to become familiar with numerals. However, during play and activities staff encourage children to count and to recognise numbers and shapes. For example, they hammer plastic shapes onto a board to make pictures, thread beads and bobbins and sing counting songs such as 'Five little speckled hens'. Children hold up the correct number of fingers when asked how many hens are left and they enjoy counting out loud. Children also have fun learning about quantity and measurement during water play and cooking activities.

Children's creativity is promoted through an interesting and varied range of activities. They have access to a good range of arts and craft equipment and enjoy painting, drawing, making models out of 'junk' and dough and using different materials to create interesting collages. Children play musical instruments, sing and dance and they also join the reception class for a music lesson when they sing songs while a teacher accompanies them on her guitar. There are daily opportunities for children to play imaginative games in the home corner, and with a good range of small world toys, such as animals, dolls and cars.

Staff devise activities which help children to learn about living things. They plant seeds, talk about insects and listen to stories about spiders, butterflies and frogs. Visitors are invited into the group to share their hobbies and interests with the children. For example, the children have recently seen and touched a baby lamb and a large spider. Staff plan a weekly topic such as 'frogs' and many of the areas for play, stories and songs all reinforce the topic. The sand tray is sometimes filled with different materials for children to explore and investigate. When it is filled with compost the children have fun digging with trowels, filling plant pots and 'planting' plastic flowers. Children learn about the wider world when they talk about different countries and their customs. They also visit the school regularly to take part in special events and to watch their Nativity play at Christmas. There are opportunities for children to use a computer so that they can become familiar with the mouse and keyboard and they also use cameras, telephones and calculators in their role play.

Children play outside most days so that they can develop their physical skills. They are very active and well coordinated as they run, climb, balance, skip and throw. Indoors they dance to music and enjoy circle games and action rhymes.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Parents provide information about their children so that staff can care for them according to their individual needs. All children are made welcome, including those with additional needs

or disabilities. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure that children can be included in all of the activities and special equipment is provided when necessary.

Children learn about the wider world through a good range of suitable resources and activities. There are books, toys, puzzles and posters which reflect positive images of different cultures, religions and disabilities and children learn about festivals, such as Christmas and Chinese New Year.

There are behaviour management policies in place which staff follow to help children to be well behaved and cooperative. Staff talk to the children to help them to understand about feelings and why certain behaviour is unacceptable. Children who are being disruptive are often moved to a different activity in order to distract them from unwanted behaviour. Staff are kind and sensitive to the needs of the children. They are good role models who talk calmly and treat children with kindness and consideration. This encourages children to be well mannered and to share and take turns. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff develop good relationships with parents and keep them fully informed about the setting and about the progress and development of their children. They are invited to an open evening before their children start in the group. At this meeting they complete the necessary documentation and staff tell them about the Foundation Stage and the programme of learning. They also have the opportunity to look at the policies and procedures. Once the children start in the group staff keep them informed about the setting and about their children's progress during daily conversations and via regular newsletters.

Parents are invited to offer comments and suggestions for improvements and they are sometimes asked to complete questionnaires which staff use to evaluate their service. Staff compile a 'treasure book' for each child which contains examples of their work and photographs of them enjoying their play and activities. Parents are encouraged to look at these books and they are also invited to become involved in the service by providing items for projects or sharing their interests with the children. All of the parents interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the service and the excellent care provided by the friendly and approachable staff.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

There are good procedures in place for the recruitment and induction of new staff. This ensures that children are cared for by suitable, qualified staff. Children are protected in the setting because they never come into unsupervised contact with people who have not been vetted. The correct adult to child ratios are maintained so that children are always well supervised, and there are contingency plans in place for staff absences to ensure that there are always sufficient staff on duty. Staff are well supported through regular team meetings and appraisal. The nursery's strong commitment to improvement is reflected in the programme for staff training and participation in the local authority quality assurance scheme. This commitment helps to improve the quality of care and learning for children.

There is a key worker system in place which helps to promote consistency of care for children and encourages good communication in the setting. Space and resources are well organised to allow children freedom to explore their environment and easy access to an interesting and stimulating range of toys and equipment.

All of the necessary documentation is in place to safeguard the welfare, care and learning of children. The records, policies and procedures are stored confidentially and they are regularly reviewed and updated in line with current legislation.

The leadership and management are good. The provider and manager work well together to ensure that children receive good quality care and education. The nursery is well organised to provide a warm, comfortable and stimulating environment where children feel happy and make good progress. The providers value their staff and there are good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the children's progress. Good staffing levels are maintained and staff are encouraged to update their training in order to improve their knowledge and expertise. There is a full range of policies and procedures in place to safeguard the welfare of children and staff regularly evaluate the service to ensure that it meets the needs of parents and children. All new staff receive induction training and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. This ensures that children are safe and secure in the setting. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection the provider has improved the care and safety of children because incidents of physical intervention are recorded, parents provide written permission for emergency medical advice or treatment and staff obtain parents' signatures after giving medication to children. Suitable plates or napkins are provided at mealtimes to ensure that standards of hygiene are maintained. In addition the outside play area is being developed in order to provide more space for children to play actively.

### **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 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 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 that fresh drinking water is available to children at all times
- ensure that there is record of all visitors to the premises

## **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):

- include numbers in wall displays to ensure that children become familiar with numerals.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)