

# St Matthews Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	315246
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Joan Isabel Madden
<b>Setting Address</b>	Stretton Road, Stretton, Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 4NT
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Matthews Pre-School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 Matthew's Pre-School opened in 1989. It operates from St Matthew's Church Hall in Stretton, Warrington and is adjacent to the primary school. The pre-school serves the community of Stretton and the rural surroundings. It is managed by a committee of parents. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 40 children on roll from two years nine months to four years and of these 31 children are receiving nursery funding. Children attend for a minimum of two sessions.

The group operates during term times, the hours of opening are; Monday 12.30 to 15.00 Tuesday and Wednesday 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.00 Thursday and Friday 09.15 to 11.45. 'Rising Fives' sessions take place on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon. A total of six staff work part-time with the children; three have an early years qualifications to Level 3 and the manager is a qualified teacher. The setting receives support from Warrington Sure Start Early Years.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Effective hygiene procedures are followed by the staff to protect the children from illness and infection. For example, the tables are covered with plastic clothes and tables are wiped down with antibacterial spray before the children have snacks. The premises receives regular checks from environmental health officers. At their last visit an issue was raised, that is still unresolved, regarding the temperature of the water for hand washing. The children are learning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices and follow healthy routines. They wash their hands with soap before handling food, and as part of the toileting routine. They sit at tables to eat their snacks to avoid cross-contamination of food. Children are treated appropriately for minor injuries, as staff are qualified in first aid and there is a fully stocked first aid box. Documentation relating to accidents and medication is correctly maintained, helping to underpin sensible procedures.

Daily routines include activities to help children develop physical skills, widen their boundaries, and develop a healthy life style. Children play outside on the new, soft, all weather surface at each session using equipment to promote their physical skills. They also enjoy playing games, such as 'Corners'. Children take part in physical activities indoors during inclement weather. They enjoy responding to a music and movement taped programme that involves them moving in a range of ways, including skipping, running and marching. They join in with action songs, such as 'Wind the Bobbin Up' and 'I jump out of bed in the morning' following the instructions as they go along. Children are made aware of how their body works, as staff encourage them to describe how they feel during the activity. When they say they feel hot, they are learning it is the result of being active. The children are able to rest and relax in the reading area. Children new to the pre-school are given encouragement and support by the staff to help them settle and feel secure.

Nutritious food and discussion promotes the children's good health. On inspection day they enjoy apples, pears, tangerines, yogurt and breadsticks. Children are also offered milk and water at snack times. Water is available to children at all times, allowing them to appreciate the healthy way of remaining hydrated. They bring their own lunches, which seem nutritious. The children are sociable and chat to one another throughout snack and mealtimes, encouraging them to value times when they eat food. Children have their health and dietary needs met because the staff work well with parents. The dietary requirements of the children are recorded onto their personal records and then onto a checklist ensuring children receive the appropriate foods for their requirements.

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

The provision is good.

Despite the restrictions put upon them regarding displays staff manage to make the pre-school welcoming by setting out a range of inviting activities. Information for parents is displayed in the foyer helping them to feel welcome. Space is organised to meet children's needs with different learning areas to provide them with a balance of experiences. There is suitable furniture and equipment available to the children enabling them to comfortably take part in activities. The resources and equipment are well-maintained, safe and clean helping to protect the children's well-being.

There are good processes in place for helping to keep the children safe. A safety officer who has a secure understanding of how to meet health and safety standards has been appointed. There are regular checks carried out on the utilities and fire equipment. The premises are secure both indoors and outdoors. Staff have an effective procedure in place to ensure the safe arrival and departure of children. A visitor's book is maintained. There are risk assessments in place and, as a routine, the premises are checked against these before the children arrive in the morning. These include checking that cleaning materials are out of reach and the outside gate is locked. The children are learning to keep themselves safe. Through the theme of holidays children think about safety in the sun. They talk about applying cream, wearing hats and drinking lots of water.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. A safeguarding children's officer has been appointed and all staff have completed the basic awareness training.

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

The provision is good.

Children are secure, happy and settled. They quickly become engrossed in activities that enable them to acquire new knowledge and skills. Children take part in a wide range and balance of activities to promote their learning. Staff cater well for the young children that are under three years. They offer reassurance and comfort in their early days at pre-school and gently encourage them to join in. During a music and movement session staff take the very young by the hand and lead the way. They adapt activities to make them manageable for them and they support the children well as they explore a good range of materials, including painting, playing with sand, modelling with play dough, mark-making and taking part in role play and dressing up. This allows them plenty of opportunity to settle, talk about their experiences and get to know the staff well, without being overwhelmed or becoming restless. Children on induction visits are warmly greeted by staff and reassured that mummy is staying as well. Staff gain a good picture of children's achievements on entry using a basic assessment for new children and follow up with focussed observations that link into the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are confident, secure in their knowledge of the Foundation Stage, enthusiastic, organised and conscientious. They provide the children with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities. The daily routine is accurately linked to the stepping stones. Staff promote children's learning by asking good opened-ended questions and teaching children new concepts and vocabulary. There is comprehensive planning in place. The long term planning is on a two year rolling programme. Staff always ensure the theme relates to 'settling in' at the beginning of the year. Medium term planning and the short term weekly planning successfully incorporates the six areas of learning. Weekly planning ensures continuous provision resources are changed and learning outcomes are covered. Staff have a system in place to gain a detailed overview of the completed stepping stones in order to easily identify gaps in learning. The operational plan and curriculum planning includes differentiation in the children's learning. Two rising five sessions are provided each week for the children starting school in September. In these sessions strong emphasis is put upon the skills, children need to acquire to ensure a smooth transition into school. In the other sessions, adult expectations and modification of activities take into account children's abilities to cater for the older more able children and any child who experience difficulties. However evaluations of these activities are general and lack sufficient detail to effectively inform the future learning

of groups of children and individuals. A folder is kept on each child containing samples of work, photographs and observations made on the child. Observations are transferred onto assessment records that link to stepping stones of the Foundation Stage. There is a written report based on these assessments for children going onto school in September.

The children are eager to learn and quickly become engrossed in activities. Their communication, language and literacy are developing well. Daily routines, such as joining in with welcoming song 'Say Hello, Hello' help to promote the children's confidence to vocalise. Through listening to stories, songs and rhymes, the children are exploring and experimenting with sounds. A permanent writing and drawing area enables children to discover writing and drawing as a means of communication. They learn about writing for different reasons as they write postcards connected with the holiday theme. A self registration scheme and card recognition activities help children to know that print carries meaning but generally their opportunities to show an interest in illustrations and print in the environment are limited. Children enjoy taking part in role play and dressing-up helping to develop their imaginative and language skills. In the 'Ice Cream Parlour' make 'drinks' and 'ice creams' for one another. As children complete puzzles, they learn how shapes fit together. The emerging pictures stimulate conversation. Jigsaws and puzzles help to promote children's counting and number recognition. Whilst making octopuses the children count the number of tentacles they are putting on their octopus. They work out how many more tentacles they need to put on the octopus. Children confidently put numbered ice creams in the correct order from one to 10, counting the ice-creams as they go along. As children play with dough they are guided into making and naming shapes they make with a cutter.

The children have good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. In response to the current theme children talk about their holiday experiences and plans. They explore a small-world seaside scene with stones, sand, little pails, underwater creatures and a boat helping them to gain knowledge about the seaside. Children enjoy playing a game of placing pictures on land, sea or sky helping them to understand the order of the world. They discover the world of nature and their environment on their walks into the local area. By posting their cards they learn how the post office system works. Members of the community visit the pre-school, such as fire officers and the police with their vehicles helping the children to understand their roles in society. There was great excitement when a helicopter visited the primary school and pre-school. The children learn how to operate a small laptop by completing simple programs. Children enjoy exploring and experimenting with a good range of creative materials. They explore the different sounds of musical instruments including bells and percussion instruments and listen to see if the note is higher or lower. Children discover the properties of shaving foam with yellow colour. Staff support children as they mould with play dough and clay using cutting and moulding equipment. Children made hedgehogs out of clay. They make a nature collage using findings collected on their nature hunt. Children spontaneously paint exploring colours and what happens when they are mixed.

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

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of equal opportunities and how to cater for children who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a very good staff to child ratio enabling staff to meet the children's needs more effectively. Children are very well supported in their chosen activities, enabling them to extend their learning and acquisition of skills. They are comforted if upset helping them to feel valued. At the beginning of the session, children are warmly greeted by staff who are interested in what they have to say, thereby boosting their self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff welcome children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are aware of how to access support and guidance from relevant professionals. If staff have concerns about a child they monitor closely and work in partnership with parents to determine correct course of action.

The children are very well-behaved. All children help to tidy up, to lively and encouraging music, putting things in their correct places including hanging up the dressing up clothes. They happily comply with the routine and quickly become engrossed in free-play activities. Children sit appropriately at registration time and snack time learning appropriate behaviour for different situations. Older children have formed friendship groups, they are able to negotiate with one another and are encouraged to help with younger children.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere. Photographs of the staff with their names displayed in hall way help parents and children to get to know staff. Children are cared for by the staff that work with parents to meet the children's needs and ensure they are included fully in the life of the setting. However, the key worker system is not fully established to more effectively co-ordinate information about the individual child's needs and progress with parents. There is an effective 'Settling In' procedure including a planned meeting with parents once child has been in pre-school for a couple of weeks to discuss how their child is settling. Parents are kept well-informed about the provision and their children's progress. A newsletter is emailed or sent to the parents that includes information on the theme and how they can support their children's learning. The staff hold a parent's evening for the leavers where the parents are shown the children's records and they receive a written report. The records contain samples of the children's work and photographs of them at work.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. There is a clear management structure consisting of an effective and proactive Chair and Committee who have appointed a highly qualified manager with two supervisors for the day-to-day running of the provision. The senior staff accept areas of responsibilities, such as safeguarding children, health and safety, planning and assessments of the children. They work directly with the children and as part of the team enabling them to monitor provision and activities on a daily basis. They have completed Warrington's self evaluation framework for early years and as a result have identified aspects for development. Action plans are now being put into place to improve the identified areas. Supervisors are able to take charge during sessions and this allows the manager to have non-contact time for monitoring and development. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work well together as a team.

Organisation is good, resulting in positive outcomes for children. Staff have a good understanding of the conditions of their registration and how to meet the standards. Vetting procedures are good to ensure that children are well protected. Group sizes and staff deployment contribute to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Records, policies and procedures work in practice to underpin the good care of the children. Children follow a sensible routine that includes a free-play session, snacks, group discussion time, singing and story time. 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 there were three recommendations raised that required the staff to improve documentation and the children's access to resources including those that promote equality of opportunity. There is now a comprehensive procedure in place for safeguarding children that is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. This enables staff to follow the correct procedures should they have a concern about a child. Children now have good access to a wide range of activities laid out around the room and are also able to access additional resources. This helps to promote their independence. Since the last inspection the staff have built up resources that promote equality of opportunity helping the children to develop positive attitudes and treat all people with respect.

At the last inspection three key issues were raised that required the staff to improve planning and the children opportunities in literacy and mathematics. Planning is now clearly linked to stepping stones and through an effective checking system staff gain an overview of the learning outcomes covered in order to promote the continuity and progression of the children's learning. Through daily routines the children have good opportunities to develop their independence skills. They are encouraged to put on own coats, use cutlery when eating, select resources for themselves and develop use the toilet independently. In the main the recommendation relating to literacy and mathematics has been met as through routines and activities the children have opportunities to recognise and learn numbers, shapes and familiar words. Please refer to the main body of the report for further details.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 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 complaint 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):

- establish a key person system to co-ordinate information about the individual child's needs and progress and share this with parents
- conform with environmental health's requirements regarding the temperature of the hot water used by children to wash their hands.

## **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):

- develop planning evaluations to effectively inform the future learning of groups of children and individuals
- provide the children with more opportunities to show an interest in illustrations and print in the environment.

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)