

St Margarets Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	316837
Inspection date	10 March 2008
Inspector	Maralyn Chiverton
Setting Address	Church House, Polefield Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 2QB
Telephone number	0161 773 9491
E-mail	
Registered person	St. Margarets 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Margaret's Pre-school is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents and members of the local community. It was registered in October 1992 to care for no more than 30 children aged two to five years. There are currently 68 children on roll, of whom 44 are in receipt of nursery education funding.

The provision operates from a church hall in Prestwich on the outskirts of Manchester. The provision serves families from the local community and supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those for whom English is not their first language

The playgroup is open for nine sessions a week, Monday to Friday during term time only. Times of opening are 09.15 to 11.45 and from 12.30 to 15.00 Monday to Thursday and from 09.15 to 11.45 on Friday. The playgroup has use of two playrooms and associated facilities. There is an outdoor play area.

There are seven members of staff who work directly with the children, four of whom hold appropriate childcare qualifications; two other staff members are working towards a recognised

qualification. The setting has been accredited with Pathways to quality. It is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean and well maintained setting. They thrive through the implementation of effective hygiene practices and procedures which meet their individual physical and health needs well. They are very independent in their personal care and understand that the need to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet is to prevent them becoming ill from germs. The implementation of a well written sick child policy ensures they are protected from illness and the spread of infection.

Children are provided with nutritious snacks which includes a choice of fresh fruit and wholemeal toast. Children are able to independently access fresh drinking water. Snack time is a very enjoyable and social occasion. A staff member sits with the children and uses snack time as an opportunity to discuss the benefits of healthy eating. For example, children talk about the benefits of drinking milk as well as discussing which animals it comes from including goats.

Children are provided with regular opportunities to promote their enjoyment of exercise through planned activities as well as independent access to the outdoor area. They are provided with a good range of equipment, such as a climbing frame, tunnels and wheeled toys which promote their awareness of space themselves and of others, as well as physical skills of moving through, over and under. Children show competence and control when handling small equipment. Comfortable cushions and a cosy book area provide good opportunities for children to rest and relax.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe in a warm, welcoming and secure environment. A register is taken of all children who attend and visitors are asked to show identification and sign a visitor's book to ensure no admittance to unauthorised persons. Children have free access to two playrooms as well as an outdoor area. The effective deployment of staff, space and resources allows children to move freely and independently and ensures all areas are well supervised. Children are offered a wide range of exciting activities as well as a broad, well balanced variety of resources and equipment which are safe, suitable and purposeful. Any in need of replacement are purchased through a reputable company which complies with BS EN standards.

Children's understanding of personal safety is well promoted through simple discussion and being an integral part of the daily routine. For example, children regularly tidy away and know not to run as they could fall and hurt themselves. They know what to do in the event of a fire as fire evacuation procedures are practised on a regular basis. Children are kept safe when playing outdoors through the supervision and vigilance of staff. They are kept free from harm through the comprehensive understanding of all staff with regard to child protection issues.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very confident, independent self-assured learners who relish their time in the setting. They arrive happy, eager to participate and join in with a rich, varied and imaginative range of exciting, interesting activities and experiences. For example, they grow cress in a variety of ways and discuss which way promotes better growth. Children are very settled and purposefully engaged in their play. They benefit from lots of support and encouragement, as well as close and caring relationships which significantly promotes their self-confidence and self-esteem. Children become involved in both group and individual play and are encouraged to make decisions and think for themselves. They are well behaved and have a good understanding of right and wrong, which is well promoted through discussion and simple explanation.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is rooted in comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage as well as the implementation of detailed planning which links into all six areas of learning. Staff use good questioning skills and additional resources to challenge children's thinking. For example, a globe is used to show children the country they live in as well as a country a child has gone to visit on holiday. Children's progress is monitored through well written observations and focused activities. However, the procedure for monitoring and recording children's progress does not always show clearly how children's individual learning is further extended.

Children are excited and motivated to learn, they initiate their own play and are able to work cooperatively with others. They are confident speakers and make good use of language to express ideas and recall experiences. Children are able to write their names using recognisable letters and are able to link letters to sounds. They show an interest in numbers and counting and use number names and mathematical language in their play. Children investigate and explore by using their senses and by observing similarities, differences and change. They talk about significant events in their lives and learn about the natural world through hands on experiences. Children use their imaginations well during role play and small world toys. They show an interest in the way musical instruments sound and use representation as a means of communication.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All staff members are positive role models who give the utmost priority to promoting children's understanding of their needs and those of others. Children are allowed freedom of expression within the boundaries of politeness and safety. They are extremely well behaved and actively contribute in taking personal responsibility for their behaviour. Any children with learning difficulties or disabilities, benefit from the designated coordinator's excellent knowledge and understanding of the issues concerning such children. Such children receive exceptional support and guidance to further promote their welfare, care and learning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through the golden rules of being kind and gentle to everyone.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The setting works extremely well with parents to support children's learning. Parents feel an exceptional sense of partnership which

is based on mutual trust and the confidence to approach staff with any queries or concerns. Parents feel valued and are respected as being their child's first educator. They are provided with information about the setting and its provision for nursery education which is of high quality and comprehensive. Parents' receive regular newsletters which inform them of current topics as well as an activity board showing daily plans. A written pre-school agreement is signed by parents and staff members which clearly shows the expectations and requirements from both partners. This ensures a very effective working partnership which contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a well organised environment where they are supported by a very good ratio of experienced, qualified staff who work exceedingly well as a team. All staff actively contribute and involve themselves in children's learning which provides a very good contribution to children's enjoyment and ability to take an active part in the setting. Effective implementation of detailed, well written policies and procedures generally contribute to children's welfare, care, learning and enjoyment. However, the confidentiality policy does not include information with regard to child protection concerns and confidentiality to ensure children are kept safe at all times.

Leadership and management is good. The setting has a clear vision which is shared with staff members. There is a strong commitment to improvement, training and the professional development of staff. The setting recognises that self-evaluation is the key to continuous improvement and use the information to monitor and assess the provision of nursery education. Strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas for improvement are identified through weekly team meetings and a monthly committee meeting. The pre-school set clear, realistic targets and evaluate the impact on children's well-being and learning through the actions taken.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection recommendations were put in place to improve children's safety and welfare. They were to develop the operational plan to include arrival and departure times and organisation of the key worker system. A further recommendation was to restrict children's access to unlocked cupboards.

Since the last care inspection the setting has taken very positive steps to improve children's safety and welfare. The operational plan now includes arrival and departure times and the organisation of the keyworker system has been further developed. All cupboards are now kept locked to restrict children having access.

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.

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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 confidentiality policy to include information with regard to child protection concerns and confidentiality to ensure children are kept safe at all times.

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):

- review the existing procedure for recording and monitoring children's progress to show more clearly how children's individual learning is further extended.

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