

St Andrew's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508072
Inspection date	16 May 2007
Inspector	Carole, Jean Bell
Setting Address	Trent Road, Shaw, Oldham, Lancashire, OL2 7QU
Telephone number	01706 654765 and 07976878318
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Registered person	St. Andrews Methodist Church Pre-School Playgroup
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 Andrew's Methodist Church Pre-School Playgroup was registered in 1968. The group operates from a church hall in the Shaw area of Oldham. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time. The group is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 09.30 to 12.00 and 13.30 to 16.00. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children on roll attending a variety of sessions. Of these, 35 receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup employs nine members of staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification. The playgroup currently supports children with disabilities.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic setting. Staff pay good attention to ensure that consistent routines are applied for hand washing after using the toilet and before eating, and children help themselves to tissues and dispose of them safely, so that they learn simple good hygiene practices. They are protected from infection and cross-contamination by the use of a sickness and exclusion policy. The premises are well maintained and satisfactory cleaning routines are in place.

Children are well nourished by healthy snacks of fresh fruit, vegetables or toast and a drink. They are able to help themselves to drinks of water from a cooler throughout the session, which further encourages a healthy lifestyle. Staff contribute to children's understanding about healthy eating through topics and displays about their food. They sit in small groups for their snack and enjoy the social occasion, chatting with each other as the staff encourage good table manners and social skills.

Outdoor activity is positively promoted and children enjoy daily physical exercise in the outdoor area whenever the weather permits. They have use of a small slide, rockers, bikes, a playhouse, tyres and sit-and-ride toys. However, there is insufficient large equipment to fully develop their gross motor skills. Children negotiate the space well, running around the area and changing direction to avoid collisions. They rest and relax indoors on comfortable seating and share story books with members of staff sitting on cushions, promoting their physical well-being and allowing them to be active or quiet as they need.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority in a safe and secure environment. Risks are identified and minimised, both indoors and outside, by regular risk assessments and a range of safety measures, such as security of external doors, regular fire safety checks and visitors signing in and out. Staff are clearly visible from their uniforms and are easily identifiable from their photographs in the entrance hall.

Children are able to develop a good sense of belonging through the warm and welcoming environment. Their art and craft work is displayed throughout the building. Children experience a sense of pride in seeing their work displayed for others to admire. They benefit from having lots of space to move around in and have free access to all areas of the playroom, paint room and hallway and use of the outdoor area. This allows them to explore their environment and take risks. They have access to a wide and stimulating range of good quality toys and natural resources that conform to British safety standards. They are able to make individual choices about their play as toys and resources are easily accessible from low-level shelving and boxes labelled with their contents, such as pictures on the dressing up box displaying contents. This leads to children gaining confidence and learning independence skills.

Children's welfare is further protected as staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and their responsibility under the Children Act to keep children safe. Information is shared with parents to ensure that they understand that the staff's first responsibility is to the

child. All staff have received training in child protection procedures and they are aware of the signs and symptoms to look for. The children's welfare is paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at the group and are eager to chat to the staff and other children. They confidently join in group activities or choose their own play. The presentation of the toys and resources allows them to make decisions about their play and initiate their own learning. Children are making progress in all areas of development. They develop physically through indoor and outdoor play, intellectually through focused activities and socially through expectations of good behaviour and values, such as sharing and caring for their friends.

Staff recognise that children need to spend time developing their senses and value children's freedom of expression, rather than producing an end product. Children print, cut and stick paper sunflowers which they compare with the real ones they are growing in individual pots. They enjoy sessions of free painting where there are no restrictions on the amount of paint they use or how they use it.

Staff have a sound knowledge of how children learn and make progress. They have a good awareness of the different frameworks to support children's learning and development which they use to plan and assess children's learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Staff have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and the early learning goals. Planning systems are in place and each child has a learning and development file which is evidenced by artwork, photographs and good observations that clearly identify children's level of learning. Activity sheets and planning identify learning outcomes but do not relate to the stepping stones. Activities are reviewed and information is used towards future planning.

Children enter the setting with confidence and are learning independence skills. They are able to carry out self-care tasks, such as hand washing, blowing their noses and accessing drinks as they want them. Children's attention is maintained during a story session where they are encouraged to be involved in talking about the book and relating it to their own experiences and using their listening skills. They are beginning to recognise their own name and there are opportunities within the session for children to make marks. Children recognise that letters and words carry meaning and children sit with a book and pencil and mirror staff when taking the register. However, there is little labelling of objects in the playroom. They count spontaneously in play and can accurately count to 10 and beyond. Staff use mathematical language in play; for instance, at snack time, they ask how many boys are at the table and how many girls, and how many children that is all together. They ask children prices of goods in the shop and children understand mathematical concepts, such as 'more than' and 'less than', and can calculate the cost of two items added together. Children develop good hand and eye coordination as they pour themselves drinks and use pencils and paintbrushes. They are beginning to learn early concepts of science with floating and sinking exercises and show an interest in why things happen. They examine pieces of driftwood and pine cones with microscopes and are excited at finding a snail and a frog in the planting area outdoors.

Children are learning about the community they live in and the wider world, allowing them to develop a sense of place. Staff provide opportunities for the children to learn about people who help them. They have interesting visits from the milkman, the librarian and the farmer with his tractor, and enjoy watching the car park being re-surfaced. They show pride in their achievements and staff offer praise as they learn to use new equipment and technology, such as the computer, where simple programs enable them to develop mouse skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a sense of the community they live in with visits to the local shops to buy fruit for their snacks and collect natural materials for artwork. They also have visits from people who offer services in the community, such as the librarian and fire officers, or staff take the opportunity to take children outside to see the female driver of car transporter fully loaded with cars. They are becoming aware of the wider world because staff plan and provide interesting activities which include celebrations from differing cultures, such as Chinese New Year and Christmas. Staff respond very well to the needs of children with disabilities. They work together with parents and inclusion workers to ensure they give consistency of care and encourage children's confidence and independence. They work hard to secure funding to provide extra staff so that they are able to offer one to one support. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children are very well behaved and staff have high expectations of them. Staff are good role models for the children and offer praise and encouragement, which increases children's self-esteem. Children are learning to take turns and play harmoniously with each other. They are learning responsible behaviour, such as helping to tidy away, and are given lots of praise for good manners and sharing or waiting for their turn at an activity.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are provided with lots of information in the bright, cheerful entrance hall and policies and procedures are available to them. New parents have a colourful information brochure and there are good settling-in procedures. Children have individual records of achievement and the children in receipt of nursery education funding have their progress cross-referenced to the stepping stone charts. This gives parents a clear picture of progress towards the early learning goals. However, parents are not provided with information on how to extend children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well cared for. The happy atmosphere of the setting contributes to the children's confidence and independence skills. They benefit from good organisation and care of an enthusiastic staff group. The staff work extremely well as a team. Their commitment to further improvement is reflected in their willingness to attend further training and their process for self-evaluation and performance management. This maintains the quality of care and learning for all children.

Records detail the individual needs of each child and include relevant consents and contacts. All required documentation is in place, is very well maintained and is reviewed regularly. Policies and procedures are clear, well detailed and shared with parents. They promote children's health, safety, well-being and the ability to make a positive contribution.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Children benefit from the very good leadership of the group and staff are appropriately qualified or working towards a qualification. Long-, medium- and short-term planning is in place. All staff are involved in planning and regular meetings are held which ensure that staff have a secure understanding of the learning outcomes of focused activities. The staff work well with their local authority advisory teacher to monitor the effectiveness of the delivery of the nursery education curriculum.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group agreed to ensure that drinking water is available at all times and to update records to include details of the regulator in the complaints policy and obtain written consent for emergency medical treatment. These recommendations have been put into place leading to a safer and healthier environment for children.

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):

- ensure that children have regular opportunities to develop their gross motor skills

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 opportunities for parents and carers to have input into children's learning
- ensure that future planning relates to the stepping stones
- increase children's opportunities to recognise simple words and names.

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