

St Gabriels Early Years Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218233
Inspection date	13 July 2007
Inspector	Jayne Clarke
Setting Address	St Gabriels RC Primary School, 283 Wilnecote Lane, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B77 2LF
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Registered person	St Gabriel's Early Years Management Group
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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 Gabriel's Early Years Group opened in 1998. It operates a pre-school and out of school club from a modular building within the grounds of St Gabriel's R.C. Primary School. It serves the local and surrounding community. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 until 11:45 and 12:45 until 15:15 for 39 weeks of the year. The out of school club is open from 07:45 until 09:10 and 15:30 until 18:00 during school term times and from 08:00 until 18:00 during school holidays.

There are currently 55 children aged between 3 years and 4 years on roll at the pre-school. Of these, 55 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 12 members of staff who work with the children. Of these, 9 have early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from an advisory teacher and from the local authority. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines which enable children to play in a clean environment. Children follow good personal hygiene routines with increasing levels of independence. Older children confidently describe how washing their hands keeps them clean and free from germs. Clear exclusion procedures for sick and infectious children are in place. Parents receive information about infectious diseases and incubation periods so that children are protected from the spread of infection. Staff demonstrate a full understanding of medication procedures and all are trained to administer first aid. Children are able to rest during quiet activities and at snack time. This effectively promotes children's good health and well-being.

All children develop good knowledge and understanding of the benefits of healthy eating. They enjoy an interesting and varied range of snacks which are of high nutritional value. School-age children describe their favourite snacks as being 'yummy' and 'good for you' such as tuna wraps, carrot-sticks and fruit. Younger children demonstrate how healthy food helps their 'muscles to grow strong'. Children and adults sit together to enjoy a sociable, relaxed meal time. They happily talk to each other whilst eating nutritious food such as bananas, grapes and raisins. Children's individual dietary needs and requirements are taken fully into consideration to ensure they receive a healthy, well-balanced diet. All children are able to help themselves to a drink of water at any time and staff take positive steps to promote children's awareness of good habits. This proactive approach helps children to adopt a positive attitude to food and drink.

Children of all ages are actively engaged in physical activities which they enjoy. They have regular opportunities to explore, test and develop their physical skills using a range of small and large equipment indoors and outside. All children are developing a good awareness of their own bodies and the importance of exercise. Staff encourage children to 'stretch' and 'warm up' their muscles and 'cool down' during vigorous exercises. Children are enthusiastically involved in music and movement sessions which help them to move their bodies in different ways. Staff provide good support to ensure that all children can take part in physical activities and games. A wide range of tools are freely accessible to the children to develop fine manipulative skills. For example, children play imaginatively in the role play house in the garden. They demonstrate their increasing confidence and abilities as they use pretend tools, cooking utensils and play food to 'fix the house', provide meals for their 'family' and buy fruit products from their 'shop'. In addition, they help to grow vegetables such as potatoes and are fascinated by the crop as they use garden tools to dig them out of the planters. Good links are established with the primary school to further enhance children's good health and physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure. Staff greet each child with a welcoming smile which helps children to feel comfortable and settled. Children use suitable and safe equipment which is appropriate for their age and stage of development. Good risk assessment systems are in place. This means that children play safely because staff provide an environment that is free from hazards. The premises are secure which means that no unauthorised person is able to enter the nursery and children are not able to leave the premises without supervision. A safe collection policy ensures that children are only collected by named persons. Children learn how to protect themselves

in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill. Safe procedures are in place to protect children who walk to the out of school club. For example, staff operate an effective 'walking bus' system, they always follow a safe walking route and wear reflective clothing.

Children are safeguarded because staff have good knowledge and understanding of their role to protect children from any risk of harm. All staff have attended basic and advanced training in child protection procedures so that they fully understand what actions to take should they have concerns about a child's welfare. Contact details for the relevant support agencies are maintained and accessible. This ensures that children's well-being is effectively protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are secure, happy and settled. They are welcomed into a caring environment and have positive relationships with staff and each other. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and play experiences for all children are good. Staff have a very good understanding of how all children learn and develop. They skilfully use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a good balance of planned, spontaneous and child-initiated activities. Children play with good quality, age-appropriate toys that help to promote their sensory, creative and imaginative development. Their self-esteem is promoted well. Children are valued as individuals and are praised consistently throughout their play. School-age children are keen and enthusiastic to attend the out of school club. They enjoy many stimulating activities which hold their interest and enable them to demonstrate their imagination and creativity. Their developing independence is fostered as they take responsibility for organising their own activities and games. All children are supported by experienced staff who actively promote and support children's personal, social and emotional development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and demonstrate this very well in their effective practice. They provide a stimulating and closely monitored curriculum through the use of written activity plans, spontaneous learning experiences and daily evaluations. As a result, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are confident, lively and friendly. They are beginning to take part in group discussions and show an interest in talking to staff and visitors about what they like to do. They listen and behave extremely well because staff create a positive learning environment where learning is fun. Children enjoy reading books for pleasure and understand that print carries meaning. They successfully identify letters of their name from a page of text and on the computer keyboard. Children are actively encouraged to find their own names on register cards and sometimes recognise the names of others. More-able children are positively supported to take the next steps in their learning. A well-stocked writing area encourages children to practise their early writing skills. Children demonstrate their skills further in their imaginative play as they use writing materials to make shopping lists and cooking notes. They speak confidently into telephone equipment during imaginary conversations.

Children demonstrate a good awareness of number and readily count to ten and above. Children are able to count up to ten during number rhymes and are guided by staff to count and recognise larger numbers during circle time activities. However, some children are less confident to do

this independently during everyday routines and play situations. Children begin to learn about shape and measure through interesting theme work and role play games. For example, they use words such as 'big' and 'little' when acting out a story rhyme. They make models from two and three dimensional objects during creative activities.

Children develop an initial sense of time and place as they talk about their own experiences such as going on holiday. They talk about the weather and recognise different weather symbols and patterns, although opportunities to further extend their knowledge is sometimes missed during circle time activities. Children begin to understand their own community and the wider world around them as they take part in local festivals and events. They learn to appreciate their own customs and beliefs and those of others. They take part in activities and projects which help them to learn about how things grow and to develop resources such as the pre-school 'garden project'. They demonstrate confidence as they use computers and other technology equipment, such as mobile phones and cameras in everyday and role play situations.

Children have very good opportunities to develop their creativity. They delight in regular musical activities. They learn to co-ordinate their body movements, control their voices and handle a variety of musical instruments. They demonstrate how to make quiet and loud sounds, and follow a range of sequences and patterns to represent sausages frying in a pan, make mountains with their knees, make small finger movements and quietly calm down as 'sleeping bunnies'. Role play resources are used very well to inspire children's imagination. Children respond with a range of emotions as they walk through 'swishy' grass and 'squelchy' mud on a 'bear hunt'. They consider their own feelings and those of the bear as they talk about being 'frightened', 'happy' and 'sad' and decide to give the 'friendly bear' a 'love' and 'hug'. This contributes effectively to children's sense of awe and wonder and sense of self. Planned activities include painting with a variety of materials. Sensory activities such as 'gloop', provide children with many opportunities to explore colour and texture. However, challenges for children to fully explore the process of change are sometimes limited during planned and free play activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Good links are formed between the early years and after school provision to ensure children benefit from consistent care, taking into account their age and level of maturity. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate care and support so that they play and learn in an inclusive environment, including those who have English as a second language. Positive steps are taken to ensure that all children feel valued and included. Children learn about a wide range of cultural traditions and beliefs so that they develop respect for each others differences and similarities. Staff know the children very well and take positive steps to meet each child's needs and interests so that they can support and enhance children's development and progress. For example, staff respond positively to children's suggestions to have a snack outside 'while it's so beautiful'. This helps children to feel valued and have a sense of belonging.

Children's behaviour is very good because staff provide positive role models that help children to respect the needs of others. All children learn through consistent routines about positive behaviour boundaries which encourage them to share, take turns and be kind to each other, as well as taking care not to hurt themselves or others. Staff use innovative methods in order to maintain a positive environment, for example, they use sign-language techniques effectively to focus older children's attention towards listening at required times. As a result, children

understand right from wrong and are keen to behave well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the close and supportive relationships between their parents and staff. Parents receive detailed information about the setting and about how their children learn and develop. Parents views are valued and respected, regular newsletters, parent questionnaires and meetings ensure good links. Although the parent information booklet lacks detail regarding child protection and complaints procedures. This potentially limits parents' knowledge of all procedures regarding their child's care and well-being. A sense of community is further developed during fund-raising projects and events such as the pre-school garden project. Parents take an active role in the Parent Advisory Group. Parents speak highly of the service provided, the care and attention children receive from staff which helps children to feel safe, secure and make good progress in their learning.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways. For example, the setting work effectively in conjunction with the early years co-ordinator in the primary school to promote children's 'Speech, Language and Communication'. Ideas, activities and themes are shared with parents to promote this aspect of children's development. This positively enhances children's learning and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care, welfare and learning are effectively promoted. The strong management team are committed to following clear vetting procedures and ensure that staff are fully aware of all policies and procedures that set high standards of practice in the setting. All of the required documents are in place for the safe and efficient management of the setting. For example, an accurate record of staff and children's attendance is maintained. Additional supportive documents such as, aims and objectives and curriculum information are easily accessible, clearly written and easy to understand. Most documents contain sufficient information to inform parents about the setting and most procedures. Although, some lack detail regarding child protection and complaints procedures. This minimises opportunities for parents to be fully informed of all procedures regarding children's well-being.

Children receive a high level of individual attention as they are grouped effectively, for example, each child belongs to a key-worker group. Children demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the nursery and out of school provision. They are keen to take on responsibilities such as being the monitor for setting the tables and showing visitors around the pre-school and primary school. Space and resources are well-organised to ensure that all children have their play and care needs met according to their changing needs and levels of independence.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. Children flourish as they are cared for by consistent staff who understand how children develop. Staff work very well together as a team to evaluate and monitor children's progression through the Foundation Stage and to contribute ideas towards future activities and themes. Communication is effective. There is a high commitment to further training and development of the setting and the service provided regarding the early years Foundation Stage and out of school care. Consequently, there are only minor areas for improvement regarding the challenges set for children within the curriculum.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to review, and amend where necessary, all policies and procedures. Since then all procedures and policies have been extensively reviewed and updated to ensure that they meet current guidelines and regulations. This effectively promotes children's safety, care and well-being.

At the last education inspection the provider was asked to consider recording children's progress past the anticipated developmental stage. Staff implement an effective profile system to monitor and record children's progress towards the early learning goals. This enables them to identify and support the developing needs of more-able 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 copy 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):

- develop further information for parents regarding complaints and child protection procedures

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):

- further extend the challenges for children during planned activities (also applies to care)

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