

St John's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 109509 |
| Inspection date | 26 June 2007 |
| Inspector | Melissa Tickner |
| Setting Address | The Reading Room, St John's Church, School Lane, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1SB |
| Telephone number | 01892 664214 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | St John's 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 John's Pre-School opened in the 1960's and is run by a parent committee. It operates from a church hall in Crowborough. A maximum of 18 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during term time only and an optional lunch club operates from 12.00 to 13.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualifications and the supervisor is a qualified teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a good awareness of keeping themselves healthy. They wash their hands regularly at appropriate times and individual hand towels are provided to promote good standards of hygiene. However, after messy play activities children use a shared hand towel to dry their hands which does not avoid the spread of infection. Staff adopt and promote positive practices, such as use of antibacterial spray to clean table tops and chairs, encouraging children to change in to indoor shoes when they come in from outside and use of disposable gloves when supporting children with toileting or changing nappies.

Children thoroughly enjoy trying healthy snacks on a daily basis, during the well organised snack time. Children enjoy crackers with a choice of cheese spread or marmite, and breadsticks. Fruit is also offered. Children choose their drinks from a choice of water, milk or squash, although drinks are not set out at other times to ensure they remain hydrated throughout the morning. Staff talk with children about which foods are good for them and remind them of the importance of drinking plenty. Children are encouraged to eat all healthy foods in their lunch boxes first and staff promote healthy eating by reminding parents about the importance of supplying their children with nutritious foods for their children's packed lunches. These aspects promote children's good health. Suitable systems are in place to ensure that staff are aware of dietary requirements, are able to deal with emergencies and illness and have sufficient first aid qualified staff present on a daily basis.

Children thoroughly enjoy daily opportunities for physical play in the well resourced, organised and inviting play area. They play outdoors every day and in most weathers, thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to develop their skills and benefit from the fresh air and physical activity. Children delight as they develop skills such as balancing, climbing, jumping and using a ladder. Staff offer a wide range of activities outdoors, such as the sandpit, play house, throwing bean bag activities and ride on toys. Excellent use is made of the outdoor area and children benefit from a good amount of time spent playing outdoors in the safe and child orientated environment. Indoors, children thoroughly enjoy singing and doing actions to the 'animal boogie' other action rhymes and PE sessions. These aspects help ensure children are able to make good progress in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which is well organised to meet their needs. Although the room is small, it provides children with opportunities for most areas of play and learning and it is well organised with low level attractively presented storage. Children have access to a wide range of good quality toys and equipment which are set up for them daily and rotated regularly. The environment is bright, attractively decorated and inviting. An extremely well organised, child orientated outdoor play area with wood chip safety flooring provides children with the opportunity to safely play and explore outdoors on a regular basis. Staff ensure security is well maintained and a health and safety checklist is in place and checked against daily. Fire drills are practised and staff are due to introduce a system to ensure that all children practise this once a term. These aspects ensure children are cared for in an appropriate and safe environment, which is organised effectively to meet their needs.

Staff help keep children safe by supervising them closely and deploying themselves well, they supervise the outdoor play area closely. They encourage children to be responsible for their own safety by giving them clear explanations about why it is important to be careful and how to keep themselves safe. Staff support children well during their activities both indoors and out, ensuring their safety whilst also allowing them time and freedom to play and explore independently. This helps ensure children are kept safe whilst at pre-school. The nominated person for child protection has a clear awareness of child protection issues and has attended relevant training in this area. A detailed policy is in place supporting staff. Consequently children's welfare and well-being is considered a high priority and is promoted by staff at all times. All these aspects help keep children safe and as a result, children are beginning to understand safety and why keeping themselves safe is important.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and confident at pre-school. They arrive with enthusiasm and receive a warm welcome from staff. All children are treated as individuals; staff meet their needs extremely well and are sensitive and caring. Younger children are supported well although no framework is in place to plan for their developmental needs currently, however staff identify their individual needs well, pitching activities accordingly. Children are happy and enthusiastic throughout the morning. Staff organise sessions well to ensure children develop close relationships with their key workers and have the space and time to use all available play opportunities.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A planning system that works well in practice is in place, with staff using focus activity sheets to help them assess activities in more depth. All staff show great levels of enthusiasm and commitment to helping children achieve and a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They are skilled at recognising children's individual needs and helping them make progress accordingly. Staff become absorbed in children's activities, talking to them about what they are doing, asking them questions and extending their thinking and skills. For example, children delight as they are read the story 'Dear Zoo' and props are used to support the story, children are encouraged to get involved, to support staff and to answer questions, as well as predict what might happen next. Staff are extremely encouraging and sensitive to all children, recognising their interests, needs and abilities. They offer children clear demonstrations, explanations and examples when introducing new activities for the first time. Consequently children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are motivated and enthusiastic and are offered some interesting and challenging activities to stimulate them and help them make progress in all areas of learning. Children show high levels of confidence and have developed strong friendships. They have strong levels of independence and are always encouraged to attempt things for themselves such as taking off their own shoes and slippers and handing out the plates and cups at snack time. Children are developing good mathematical skills. They freely and confidently count in many situations and understand simple mathematical challenges such as how many ladybirds there will be if one more is added. Staff encourage children to learn about shapes, giving clear explanations to help them understand, such as a square having four corners and four sides the same. Plenty of mathematical resources enable children to develop skills in this area.

Children thoroughly enjoy story time and staff make it a fun, enjoyable learning opportunity, with a range of props. Children regularly access the well resourced book corner and are surrounded by print in the form of labelling and posters. Children have plenty of opportunities to mark make through painting, chalk board and a range of pens and pencils always being available. Staff introduce new words to children regularly as they play, for example whilst looking at animal flash cards they discuss the sea horse, barracuda fish and manta ray. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore. They freely do this outdoors in the sand and digging and exploring in the barked area. They enjoy planting opportunities and experiment with magnets. Children have a wealth of opportunities to learn about the world around them through planned topics such as the ocean and pets. They also enjoy visitors from the local community such as the firemen and the lollipop lady. They learn about wider society through activities, such as Chinese New Year and Diwali.

Children enjoy playing creatively and explore the play dough, paint and use chalks. Children thoroughly enjoy painting and the arts and crafts on offer, however much of this is adult led and pre-drawn/cut or arranged for them. In addition there is an emphasis on the use of worksheets. This can limit their creativity. They thoroughly enjoy using the well resourced imaginative play area and delight at the well planned and organised music sessions where they have the opportunity to explore sounds, try different instruments and investigate playing instruments fast and slow, loud and quiet.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are supported as they play, and staff are skilled in helping children feel valued, supported and well cared for, encouraging them to feel settled and valued at pre-school. Children show strong levels of confidence and independence, and appear happy and established at the setting. They develop an awareness of our wider society through planned activities. They play with resources promoting diversity, such as books, dolls and play people. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. A nominated Special Educational Needs Coordinator is in place, which helps ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported and have their needs met.

Children's behaviour is managed with an extremely positive emphasis. Staff use praise and encouragement with children constantly, and encourage good manners, sharing and turn taking. Staff place a positive emphasis on reinforcing children's desirable behaviour and make good use of positive words and actions, thanking children when they have behaved well and listened. Children have benefited from a 'play kindly week' to encourage good behaviour. Staff value children's work, contributions and efforts and use distraction positively, when appropriate. Methods used by staff for managing children's behaviour are effective and work extremely well in practice. They are very positive role models, helping to create a pleasant environment. This results in children who are happy and settled and contributes to helping children feel secure and understanding the behaviour rules of the setting.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are actively involved with the pre-school and operate a committed and supportive parents' committee. Staff work closely with parents regarding their children's care and education and have fostered good working relationships. Staff liaise with parents about their children's progress on an informal basis and refer to their children's observation records to keep them updated. Currently there is limited information available about the Foundation Stage of education. Staff provide a good range of other information for parents, including an informative notice board, regular newsletters, parents' prospectus and

website. Information is displayed to encourage parents to get involved with their children's learning at home. Systems to work with parents are effective and help to keep them informed about their children's care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Good organisation of the pre-school is evident in all areas and contributes to promoting strong outcomes for children. Paperwork is effectively organised and most required documentation is in place, with some minor omissions, and currently the insurance certificate is not available. A detailed and comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place which have been recently revised and updated. Effective and robust systems are in place for the recruitment, vetting and induction of new staff, which is supported by clearly written policies. All staff are police checked and two of the four staff hold relevant qualifications. Good ratios are maintained and staff deploy themselves well, supporting children effectively. This enables them to offer a well run session, contributing to good learning opportunities for all children and ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management are good. Staff are positive in their roles and work well as a team and are supported by an enthusiastic supervisor and parent committee. All staff contribute to the planning for funded children and evaluate this to make improvements. Staff training and development needs are informally discussed on a regular basis and appraisals are being introduced for all staff. Staff are enthusiastic, committed and settled in their jobs. Staff are willing and keen to make changes and progress and regularly hold development meetings where development plans are completed to improve the care and education of children. Staff and the committee have made changes recently to promote good outcomes for children and have become actively reflective, welcoming new ideas, suggestions and improvements, through their development meetings. These aspects contribute to positive outcomes for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in October 2004, the pre-school were set recommendations relating to the care and education of children. Staff have now addressed the staffing issues relating to qualifications as one member of staff has completed her NVQ level 2 training. Records are now kept securely and confidentially as a lockable filing cabinet has been purchased. All policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated and now provide a comprehensive overview of the operating of the pre-school.

Written planning has been further developed and focus activity sheets have been introduced and are used every week which link clearly to the stepping stones and allow for children's individual abilities. Staff have introduced the 'stepping forward profiles' which ensures observations are linked clearly to the stepping stones and help identify children's next steps for learning. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress at the pre-school; however there still remains little information for them about the Foundation Stage of education. This remains an area of development at this inspection.

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 children can independently access drinking water at all times and that hand drying avoids the spread of infection at all times
- ensure minor paperwork aspects are addressed and evidence of the insurance certificate is available 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):

- further develop children's opportunities to express themselves freely in art work, including minimising the use of worksheets
- further develop the range of information provided for parents' regarding the Foundation Stage of education

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