

# St Andrew's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301698
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 January 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Annette Stanger
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of St Andrews Pre-School (Blackburn)
<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 Andrew's Pre-School is committee run. It opened in 2001 and operates from a house belonging to Twin Valley homes, situated in the Livesey area of Blackburn. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08.00 to 12.00 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 10 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, seven children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area.

The pre-school employs three members of staff. All staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

High priority is given to children's health, physical and emotional well-being. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of the children's capabilities. They take time to regularly observe children and this means they are able to provide excellent levels of support for children to actively explore their immediate environment and develop their physical strength, skill and coordination. Exceptional attention is paid to making the very best of the outdoor facilities and children have continued access to outdoors throughout the session. They make excellent progress in their physical development and are helped to understand that this contributes to keeping them healthy. There is a wealth of opportunities for children to develop a range of skills. They balance and coordinate their bodies well as they climb the stairs to the slide, balance on stepping blocks and use a range of wheeled toys, including scooters and tricycles. They successfully pedal both backwards and forwards and negotiate space well, as they are able to stop and manoeuvre safely around their peers. Excellent coordination is shown as children play with a golf set. They manage the club well to skilfully manoeuvre the ball between the cones, showing superb concentration.

An excellent variety of healthy balanced snacks are provided for the children and the setting is committed in its approach to healthy eating. Mealtimes are relaxed, social occasions when children and staff sit together to enjoy their food and each other's company. Drinking water is always available and children help themselves from the water dispenser to successfully accommodate their thirst. Healthy and nutritious snacks offered to the children include, a choice of milk or water to drink, fresh fruit, salad items, wholemeal pitta breads, cherry tomatoes and oranges. Children know the foods that are good for them and talk about this with both staff and their peers at mealtimes. For example, they talk about the fact that oranges make you healthy and strong and how brown bread is very good for you. Staff are aware of the many learning opportunities to promote an understanding of healthy eating. They raise children's awareness about the benefits on the body by eating and drinking healthily. Innovative projects are planned around healthy living and these ensure the children are knowledgeable about the importance of looking after their bodies and protecting their teeth. For instance, staff arranged for a visitor to come to the setting to talk to children about how to look after their teeth properly.

Staff promote children's health superbly by taking a range of positive actions. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication meet all requirements. Staff are trained in administering first aid and pay very good attention to continually updating this knowledge to protect children's health. Staff actively seek information regarding children's health and dietary needs, and any allergies or cultural preferences. This information is shared effectively to ensure staff are aware and remain vigilant in ensuring that the children's health is continually safeguarded in line with their individual requirements. Children thrive because the utmost attention is paid to ensuring precautions are taken to successfully avoid cross-contamination, with hygienic procedures for nappy changing, hand washing and general personal hygiene.

Staff give exceptional levels of support and guidance in encouraging children to gain an excellent understanding of health and hygiene. Discussions with children about germs, and posters displayed at their level, raise awareness of why it is important to disinfect the tables before snack time, to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet, and why such practices keep them healthy. Children carry this knowledge through into their role play, as they imitate

this practice and talk about getting rid of germs and why it is important to wash their hands before meals. Staff actively encourage children to think for themselves and to make decisions regarding their personal care. For example, staff position tissues within easy reach for them to independently attend to their own needs as they blow their noses and dispose of tissues hygienically in the bin. Children are also praised by staff as they remember to cover their mouths when they cough. They are encouraged to consider how to dress correctly according to the weather conditions as staff ask them what items they will need if they choose to play outdoors. For example, children know they need to wear their boots, coats and rain coats when playing outdoors in the rain.

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

The provision is good.

Staff have a good understanding of how to protect children and recognise that this is their first priority. They are vigilant and have a good awareness of the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. The safeguarding and reporting procedures contain all the required information. Staff are familiar with these and of the correct action to take should they have any concerns about a child's welfare.

There are good procedures and practices in place for ensuring the safety of the children. Staff undertake thorough risk assessments and continually assess potential risks to children, taking appropriate action to effectively minimise these. Staff have a good awareness of security. They ensure that children cannot leave the premises unsupervised and there can be no unauthorised access to children. There are clear procedures to ensure children are collected by authorised people and arrivals and departures are safely managed by staff.

The setting is situated on two levels and downstairs is the main play space used by the children. There are two rooms upstairs containing further resources and children, accompanied by a staff member, can choose to play upstairs during the session. Staff have a walkie talkie system in the event that they are working alone and need to communicate quickly with staff downstairs, although staff do not always remember to use these in their daily practice.

All fire safety precautions are in place and children learn about emergency evacuations because they are regularly practised and recorded to highlight any potential problems. Children are beginning to learn about what is dangerous and how to keep themselves safe. Staff raise their awareness through gentle reminders to hold onto the hand rail when going up and down the stairs and to sit on their bottoms when going down the slide.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, child-friendly, homely environment. They have safe and independent access to a wide range of good quality age-appropriate toys, furniture and resources. These are clean, well maintained and are regularly checked for safety. Both the indoor and outdoor space is organised effectively, which enables the children to explore and move freely within a safe environment.

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

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and enjoy themselves in the busy but calm environment. They are helped to achieve by a consistent staff team who are enthusiastic, sensitive to their individual needs and skilled in supporting their play. All children enter the setting confidently and quickly settle into the familiar routine. They use their initiative well, selecting their own resources and

experiences as well as participating in planned activities. Staff plan a stimulating range of practical activities that further children's development. They take time to listen to the children and value their input. The children's ideas are incorporated into the planning so that play experiences are meaningful for the children, which helps build their self-esteem and supports their learning. Children are given time to develop their ideas and explain their thinking, enabling them to expand their knowledge and understanding and develop in confidence.

## Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. This ensures that children are offered a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum. Staff know the children well. They ensure that appropriate challenges are incorporated into the curriculum, based on observations of what the children know and can do. They are very skilled at communicating with children to extend their experiences and enrich their learning, without interfering unnecessarily in their play. Staff extend children's learning by asking open ended questions, which encourages their language development and extends their thinking and knowledge. Written plans cover the six areas of learning. They clearly show differentiation and include possible learning intentions of activities. Children's progress is recorded in their individual files of achievement and their next steps in their learning are identified. Files include observational notes, samples of their work and creativity, and photographs to demonstrate the children's achievements under each area of learning. Staff make good use of this information to inform future planning to ensure that children remain appropriately challenged. Although, this information is not then clearly linked to the stepping stones to show how the child is progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Staff provide children with a good balance of stimulating practical opportunities for them to independently investigate and explore, as well as planned activities. The children are extremely keen, interested and eager to learn. They are very confident and settle quickly into the familiar routines, for example, as they take part in self-registration on entering the setting. They are able to recognise their own name as they each select their name balloon and place it on the registration board to show they are present. Some children are also able to recognise the names of the other children in the group as well as their own. Children enjoy sharing books with both staff and their peers as well as alone. They handle books correctly and talk about the pictures and what they think might happen next.

At group registration children demonstrate that they are confident speakers and have good recall as they talk with excitement about recent family events and experiences. They use language effectively to question, describe and explain their intentions. They know many letter sounds and use these in their play explaining P is for printer. During their play, children show that they have an extensive vocabulary as they talk on the phone in their role play and imitate adults. Their writing skills are developing well. Good use is made of the mark making table and the chalk boards in the outdoor area and children write confidently for a variety of purposes.

Children use tools safely and skilfully for a range of purposes. They show good physical skill as they mould and manipulate dough, using tools to cut, poke and flatten to achieve a desired effect. They also construct with larger materials such as large foams blocks and boxes to further their physical development. Excellent mouse control is shown when using the computer and children independently access the computer, operating simple programmes and performing simple functions with great skill. They learn more about the natural world as they observe their immediate environment. They talk about what is seen and what is happening and observe

changes to the weather. When it snows they decide to collect it and bring it indoors to observe what will happen and then talk with excitement about how quickly it melts and turns into water.

Children use their imaginations well and express their creativity in a range of ways, during role play situations, as they build with different types of construction, draw and mould with dough. They include lots of detail in their drawings, particularly when drawing faces with all the main features as well as teeth inside the mouth and a tongue. In their role play they particularly enjoy imitating adults as they bath babies during water play and wash their hair, before drying them off with a towel. They use their senses well as they smell the soap in the water and test that the water is of a safe temperature for their babies. Resources are used in a range of imaginative ways by the children. For example, a hobby horse is used as a golf club and a plastic plum as a golf ball, using one object to represent another. Staff are quick to acknowledge this interest in golf and extend this by bringing in a plastic golf set the following day, much to the children's delight.

Children's counting skills are developing well and staff regularly count with the children. During registration they count the numbers of children and the numbers of balloons on the registration board. They show an interest in number problems as they find the total number items in two groups by counting all of them, for example as they count the swords during a group game. Whilst playing with a range of resources they demonstrate their increasing knowledge of shape, space and measure. For example, as they play with the small world resources they try and find the correct sized play person that will fit to go down the slide. They know the names of many different shapes as they play with the shape sorter and on the computer, including a triangle, square, circle and star. Size and positional language is used continuously in their play. Children describe how they are going up the stairs to the top of the slide and how they are going to slide down. They explain how they are going to put their babies to sleep next to them so they can see them and make sure they are safe.

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

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is exemplary in response to the staff's calm, consistent and positive approach to behaviour management. Children are well mannered, take turns and share resources well, cooperating effectively with one another. For example, children learn to negotiate as they take turns on popular resources such as the computer. Staff praise and encourage children and take the time to acknowledge their good behaviour. There are effective methods in place designed to recognise children's individual achievements and these are celebrated by staff continuously, which promotes the children's self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff promote an inclusive provision and all children are positively welcomed. Resources reflect positive images of diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Children are helped to consider and value diversity through activities centred on various festivals and celebrations, such as Eid. Staff understand policies on equal opportunities and work within these treating children with equal concern, whilst celebrating their individuality.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive regular information about the setting and their child's progress through, for example, a welcome booklet, children's achievement files, wall displays and regular newsletters. There is a complaints procedure which is shared with parents, although Ofsted's contact details are not sited in an easily identifiable place. There are effective settling in procedures in place that are geared to the child as an

individual and this means children settle quickly as their needs are met. Planning is displayed for parents and these identify how continuous basic provision is used to promote broad learning objectives within the areas of learning. Plans show expected learning outcomes and differentiation, to extend the children's learning and enhance their experience. These help to give parents a clear picture of what goes on in the setting and how their child's learning is encouraged. The setting also operates a library loan scheme where children can borrow books to take home and this allows parents to become involved in their child's learning. Children's individual achievement files are freely accessible to parents and are also shared at organised coffee mornings, where parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's file in more detail with staff. Files include observational notes, samples of their work and creativity and photographs to demonstrate their achievements under each area of learning. Although, the files are not entirely successful in demonstrating to parents their child's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are effective and ensure that children are well protected and cared for by qualified staff with good knowledge and understanding of child development. Regular staff appraisals are used well to ascertain continued suitability. The majority of the staff have worked in the setting for many years and this allows both children and their parents to experience a sense of familiarity and security from the stability provided. All of the required documentation is in place to ensure children are well cared for.

All staff have a high regard for the well-being of the children and work successfully as a team and in the children's best interests. The environment, both indoors and outdoors, is organised flexibly and creatively so children can choose to access areas and resources that appeal to their individual interests. This contributes to children's good levels of independence and actively increases their confidence as they initiate their own play and learning.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The provision is proactive in identifying their own areas for development and work closely with the local authority. This demonstrates a strong willingness to continually improve and has a positive impact on the care, learning and play provided.

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 the setting was asked to make improvements to aspects of the documentation, the routine for snack time, and to improve children's access to equipment in the upstairs play rooms. All of these recommendations have now been successfully addressed. There is a clear system in place to ensure that written permission is requested from parents at the time of placement, for the seeking of emergency medical advice or treatment in the future. Medication records have been improved and there is now provision for parents to countersign to acknowledge when medication has been given. This means that parents can check the entry and that their written instructions have been followed in practice. The organisation of the sessions has improved with regard to the routine at snack time and children's usage of the upstairs rooms. Children's independence is now successfully encouraged at snack times as they pour their own drinks from lidded jugs, spread their own toast and crackers and select their own choice of fruit. There is also planned usage of the upstairs rooms to ensure that all children

have regular opportunities to access the equipment. This has been successful in promoting children's independence and encouraging their decision making skills as they exercise choice and make full use of the provision and resources.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting were asked to; make better use of the assessments and observations to inform planning, to monitor the educational programme to ensure that all areas of learning are covered, and to include a system to show the progress children are making in individual areas of learning, to inform the planning and grouping of children. Systematically now at all planning meetings staff make use of the children's achievement files to inform the planning. This ensures they are providing appropriate challenges for all abilities to promote their all round development across each area of learning. Within the children's achievement files there is a section for each area of learning and this allows staff to monitor that these are being covered sufficiently over time. This is checked at the planning meetings by the staff team to monitor the educational programme and the balance of experiences for children across the areas of learning.

### **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.

## **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):

- review the operational plan to include how staff are deployed when using the rooms upstairs, in particular precautions taken when lone working with the children
- review current arrangements for sharing the complaints procedure with parents.

#### **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 the children's files of achievement to link the observations to the stepping stones so that these clearly show parents the progress their child is making towards the early learning goals.



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)