

# Saughall Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	305287
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Suzette Butcher
<b>Setting Address</b>	c/o Vernon Institute, Saughall, Chester, CH1 6EN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 880954
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<b>Registered person</b>	Saughall Pre-School
<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 satisfactory. 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?

Saughall Pre-school was established in 1976. It is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and staff. It operates within Vernon Institute in Saughall village, near Chester. The pre-school is open during term time only from 09.15 to 11.45 each weekday and from 13.15 to 14.45 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for children under three years. Children have access to fully secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 43 children aged from two years six months to under five years on roll. Of these, 39 children receive funding for early years education. Children attend from the local area. There are five members of staff who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a generally healthy environment where policies and procedures are in place to protect their well-being. All the staff attend paediatric first aid training to update their knowledge and enable them to respond appropriately to minor accidents and injuries. However, parents are not required to sign their prior permission for emergency medical treatment which compromises their good health. Play equipment and areas, such as table tops, are cleaned on a regular basis to reduce the risk of cross-contamination and infections. Children learn to follow satisfactory hygiene routines when they wipe their hands with antiseptic spray before they handle food. Older children understand that they are removing the germs that may make you ill and confidently manage their own personal care in the accessible toilet.

A healthy lifestyle is promoted for children as they benefit from fresh air and physical exercise during sessions in the nearby outdoor play areas. Children have fun as they learn to move with control and use their bodies in different ways on large climbing apparatus or as they carefully negotiate a slide or tunnel. The large hall is available for musical movement or action songs when the weather is inclement.

Children learn about the benefits of following a healthy diet during general discussion and topic work. They enjoy experimenting with different tastes and textures during food tasting sessions, growing plants from seeds or learning more about foods from different cultures. A choice of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit, raisins or cheese dips with bread sticks, further promote children's good health. Children's individual dietary needs are recorded and met. A choice of milk or water is available at snack times but a number of children bring their own sugary drink each day. This has a negative impact on their health. Fresh drinking water is available, although, it is kept at a high level where it is not easily accessed by children.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally safe within the shared premises in the village hall. The maintenance of the building is adequate although some potential hazards and risks to children around the building are not always identified and made safe. For example, rusty pipes, stacked tables and peeling paint present potential risks to children. Consequently, children must be closely supervised when they move between areas and this restricts their independence. Staff complete daily risk assessments to ensure the main play areas are safe and procedures, such as locking doors during sessions, protect children from non-vetted people. Children are encouraged to recognise what is dangerous and respond appropriately. They are reminded of the safe way to handle scissors or to stay in line when walking across the car park. Children's welfare is protected by the staff's sound knowledge of current child protection policy and procedures. Contact details are available for the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The outdoor play area has recently been successfully developed and provides a well organised and stimulating, learning environment for children across the age ranges. All resources in the indoor play area have to be cleared away each day and this restricts display and storage options. Subsequently, the indoor environment is dull and uninviting for children and their families. A selection of suitable toys and resources are organised by staff for each session. The choice offered is limited and does not encourage children to make their own decisions and explore

creative opportunities. A large number of resources are available in storage and children are invited to request favourite activities during the session.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Younger children are offered extra guidance and support as they settle in and gradually learn to relate to others in the small, cosy afternoon group for children under three years. The staff have recently attended training on 'Birth to three matters' framework and they are currently implementing aspects of this into their practise to meet the needs of young children. Children enjoy experimenting with different materials, such as sand or play dough, and have fun participating in lively action rhymes or listening to stories. Observation and assessment systems are also being adapted to meet their needs but this is still in the early stages.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. A pilot scheme to develop children's communication, language and literacy skills has recently been introduced and this has quickly become one of the key strengths of the pre-school. Children's awareness of sounds, rhymes and rhythm is greatly enhanced through daily activities, such as clapping rhythms, continuing rhymes or identifying initial sounds. Parents are also involved in the scheme and this enables them to reinforce children's learning at home. Consequently, the consistent and positive approach to language and communication underpins children's play and learning to form a very strong foundation for early language and literacy skills. Children are confident communicators and happily share their experiences with adults and other children. They enjoy singing lively rhymes and energetic action songs. Familiar stories come to life as they re-enact the events with small world figures and picture books that they have created together. Simple calculations and concepts of number are introduced as children count to 10 on their fingers or work out how many spots each ladybird has altogether.

Children make good progress in most areas of learning due to the staff's sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. A range of suitable activities are organised by staff on a daily basis to meet the needs of individual children. However, choices are limited and children are offered few opportunities to make their own decisions and ideas as they explore and experiment with different resources and materials. This restricts the development of children's imagination and creativity. Most activities are adult-led, which means that children are not encouraged to initiate their own games. Some activities lack imagination and do not motivate children to persevere or enable them to make connections between different areas of learning. This means that children are not offered enough opportunities to become active learners or to learn through practical experiences.

Weekly planning is based on themes and topics, such as 'Holidays' or 'Our Sense', and this provides a focus for children's interest. Children learn more about their environment and the natural world in the outdoor environment. They stop to examine a large number of caterpillars crawling on a plant, collect rainwater in a pot or help to grow plants. They are introduced to aspects of technology when they learn to activate a game on a laptop or take photographs with a digital camera. Staff observe and record individual children's progress during focus activities. They use this information to build on learning and plan the next steps for each child. A record of individual children's progress is recorded on a regular basis and a detailed report is given to parents at the end of the summer term.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the friendly setting where everyone relates well to one another. The supportive and amiable relationships amongst the staff and with the children's families is reflected in the friendly relationships amongst the children. Children happily share, take turns and play together cooperatively with few prompts and reminders from staff. Minor disagreements are dealt with in a way that is appropriate to each child's age and stage of development. For example, younger children are gently redirected when they squabble over the same toy. With older children, staff sensitively discuss the consequences of their actions. Children are involved in agreeing and reviewing house rules as they learn to understand and respect clear boundaries. They stop and listen when prompted and happily help to tidy away toys at appropriate times. They are aware that rules are required to ensure that everyone plays fairly and safely together.

Equality of opportunity is supported as children are invited to share the same toys and activities. Opportunities to learn about diversity, such as celebrating Diwali or listening to stories about other cultures, increases children's understanding and awareness of different values in the wider world. The inclusive ethos and caring staff ensures that children with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included. Staff work in partnership with parents and support agencies to meet individual children's needs and they attend relevant courses to increase their knowledge and understanding. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents state that they are very happy with the quality of care provided for their children. They comment that they know who to talk to if they have any concerns and find staff very friendly and approachable. The setting's policies and procedures are available on request and notices or newsletters keep parents informed about significant events. Information is shared informally at hand over times which promotes effective continuity of care. The newly established parents' committee is currently seeking ways to develop stronger links with parents and carers. Parents are provided with information about the Foundation Stage and 'Birth to three matters' framework and the information booklet describes aspects of the pre-school's daily routine. Parents have the opportunity to attend a meeting about the purpose of the current communication, language and literacy project and offered useful ideas about how they can help their child at home. This enables them to become more actively involved in their child's learning. Parents receive a comprehensive report on their child's progress each summer and staff regularly share ideas about helping their child with their next steps in learning.

Strong links are maintained on visits to the local primary school and this helps children to transfer more confidently into school. The pre-school is a key focus and communication point within the local village community.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Appropriate employment procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are suitably vetted and that children are protected. Staff meetings are held regularly and appraisal meetings create opportunities for management and staff to identify individual needs and discuss issues within the setting. The ongoing suitability of staff is monitored adequately by management. The setting's main areas for improvement are informally identified by management and improvement programmes implemented. For example, the outdoor play area has been successfully developed to increase learning

opportunities for children. Nevertheless, improvement is not consistently organised because the setting's strengths and weaknesses are not effectively monitored and prioritised towards the continual improvement of the quality of care for children. The educational programme is also monitored informally when management discuss issues with staff and review children's progress. However, the procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and evaluate its impact on children's progress are not fully established. This has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and children's learning. Management regularly attend local Sure Start meetings to share good practice and learn about new initiatives.

Child to adult ratios are maintained and an effective key worker system provides consistency and continuity for children and families. Members of the staff team have worked together in this pre-school for a number of years and know the families and children well. Staff are well qualified and continue to attend appropriate training to increase their knowledge and enhance their skills. They work well together as a team. Appropriate documentation is in place and stored securely. Information about important changes in legislation, such as the complaints procedure, is readily available for parents.

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 providers agreed to review the special needs policy and this now meets regulations. Further recommendations were made to improve hygiene routines at snack times and provide a suitable range of toys and resources for children. Hygiene routines have been successfully reviewed and a wider range of toys and resources are available to meet the developmental needs of children. All these changes improve the overall quality of care for children.

There were two points for consideration at the last nursery education inspection and these have been addressed by the providers. Consequently, written information on the Foundation Stage is available and parents are regularly informed of their child's achievements and progress. Opportunities for children to develop independence have increased at snack time and their awareness of a healthy lifestyle has improved through a planned and consistent approach to outdoor play. These changes have improved the overall quality of early years education for children.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 6 - Safety, National Standard 7 - Health and National Standard 12 - Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted visited the provision on 22 March 2007. An action was raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. The provider remains qualified for registration.

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):

- obtain parents' prior signed permission for emergency medical treatment
- actively promote a choice of healthy drinks at snack time
- ensure all potential hazards around the building are clearly identified and made safe for children.

#### 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 the choice of resources and opportunities that are available for children to further develop independent learning (also applies to care)
- increase opportunities for children to become active learners and develop creativity (also applies to care)
- improve systems to monitor and evaluate the settings strengths and weaknesses and the quality of teaching and learning.

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)