

Sutton St. James Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	305353
Inspection date	24 September 2007
Inspector	Sue Anslow
Setting Address	Church Lane, Sutton, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 0DS
Telephone number	01260 252 112
E-mail	
Registered person	Sutton St James Pre-School Committee
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?

Sutton St James Pre-School is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents. It opened in 1970 and operates from the church hall in the village of Sutton, outside Macclesfield. A maximum of 32 children may attend the preschool at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00, term time only. Outdoor play space is located in the adjoining car park and the vicarage garden across the road.

There are currently 34 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from the immediate locality and surrounding villages and may attend a variety of sessions.

The preschool employs eight members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The preschool receives support from Sure Start, the Preschool Learning Alliance and teachers at Hollinhey School.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection because staff follow comprehensive procedures and routines with regard to health and cleanliness. A number of staff have first aid certificates, whilst others are progressing to certification and manage any accidents or illnesses well. Children learn about good hygiene practices through regular routines, stories and songs and they know that washing their hands will get rid of the nasty germs. Nappies are changed as required and tables cleaned with anti bacterial spray before serving food.

The children enjoy a range of energetic physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. During dry weather they play outside in the car park or across the road in the vicarage garden, where they develop self confidence in their physical skills as they use a range of sports equipment and ride bikes and scooters. Indoors, children improve their large muscle co-ordination as they use appropriate equipment to practice climbing and balancing. They especially love the parachute game and jump up and down excitedly, as it is being prepared. Hand eye coordination is promoted through learning to use smaller tools and equipment, such as scissors, rollers, cutters, threading beads and puzzles.

Children are well nourished at each session with fresh healthy snacks and drinks of milk or water. Individual dietary needs are respected as staff consult with parents and record their requirements. Fresh fruit, salad items and raw vegetables are included in the weekly menu and children learn about healthy eating through appropriate activities and discussions. They cut out pictures of food from magazines, deciding if they are good for you or not, cut up fruit for a fruit salad and watch the development of their cress seeds growing on wet cotton wool. Children can have drinks of water on request, but nothing is available for them to help themselves to during the session, which compromises their health needs in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in the bright and airy church hall with their art work displayed on two large notice boards. The large rooms can be further divided by doors or screens, allowing children to play together or separately and all areas are clean and well maintained. Outdoor play space is provided in the adjacent car park and the vicarage garden, which provides children with opportunities for fresh air, exercise and contact with nature. A range of safe and suitable toys and play equipment promotes children's all round development and the variety of activities set out allows children freedom of choice as to what they play with that day. Good use is made of natural play materials to extend children's play experiences, such as sand, water, play dough, leaves and textiles.

Children's safety and security is monitored by staff following good health and safety procedures. Doors are kept locked during the sessions and risk assessments of the premises and play equipment are carried out regularly. Evacuation procedures are displayed prominently, although actual fire drills are not carried out regularly enough to ensure that all the children are familiar with the routine. This compromises their safety in this area. Children are protected from possible abuse or neglect because staff understand their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection issues. Senior staff have attended relevant training courses and a comprehensive policy is available for the parents information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and eager to participate in the variety of activities available. Close and caring relationships between children and staff increase children's trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. A combination of large and small group activities promotes children's ability and confidence to work in different ways. Their independence is promoted quite well, through child initiated play and sensitive routines.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have access to a good range of appropriate activities and resources which promote their all round development and learning. Children's learning is well supported by an enthusiastic and experienced staff team who use the Foundation Stage curriculum effectively to provide children with good quality care and education. Children are provided with lots of opportunities to understand and recognise the letters of the alphabet. They make marks and write pretend lists in their notebooks at the 'office' table. They look for their name badges on arrival and for their own place names at the snack table. Staff introduce letter sounds at every opportunity and children love listening to stories as they try to guess what the wolf might do next or which flap the dog is hiding under. Children are developing an understanding of number, shape, space and time through interesting activities organised by staff. They count the numbers of children in the circle and how many cups they need at their snack table. They calculate how many currant buns might be left if one is taken away and decide where to place the square shape in the computer game.

Children are able to speak with increasing confidence in the larger group as they describe the object they have brought in for the 'letter of the week' basket. They manage their own bathroom needs and wash their hands using the liquid soap. Children enjoy giving out plates at snack time and sometimes buttering their own crackers. However, opportunities to help themselves to food and pour their own drinks is limited, which hinders their independence and responsibility in this area. Children learn about nature and the world we live in through a variety of themes and activities during the year. They visit a local farm to see the baby animals and bring their own baby pictures in so they can compare the difference to the way they look now. They sow and tend seeds and bulbs and study patterns in leaves and bark during outdoor play. Children are able to explore and investigate how ice cubes melt in different temperatures and what a fresh pineapple looks like inside. Children learn the sequence of the days of the week and the months of the year and proudly show off a large wall map showing different places their teddy bears have travelled to.

A wide variety of different resources and materials are available for the children to express their own ideas in creating art and craft work. They mix the baking ingredients enthusiastically, pour soft sand into different containers and paint large murals on the walls outside with water. Using natural materials, such as soap flakes and polystyrene shapes, children make winter pictures and models, which enhance their play experiences. Music and singing is included in the daily programme of activities and staff often burst into song spontaneously whilst playing with the children. For example, singing 'Horsey, Horsey' whilst looking at a book of animal pictures. Children are happy and settled in the group. They are generally well behaved, learning about the consequences of their actions through good staff support and guidance. They show care towards each other as they share and take turns and older children often help the younger one's to reach the paper towel holder or find their place at the table.

Activities are well planned and involve the children in a range of interesting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. All staff contribute to these plans and each play session is discussed and evaluated by the staff, which serves to highlight any areas for extension or improvement. Staff monitor and observe each child's achievements and use these observations to complete developmental records. The systems in place enable staff to quickly identify any gaps in children's progress and to plan for the next steps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated with equal concern and have their individual needs met very well. Familiar toys or comforters may be brought from home, which helps children feel supported and develop a sense of belonging. Children learn about the wider world we live in and the care of others through a variety of different play experiences. Festivals are celebrated and visits to the local school and nearby church are included in the curriculum. Fund raising events feature strongly, as children help collect items for those less fortunate than themselves. All children are welcomed into the group and their care and development is supported well by staff who work closely with parents and outside agencies to promote any particular requirements. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is managed well by staff who act as good role models by praising children for their achievements, kindness to others and helpfulness. They enjoy putting the toys away, giving out the musical instruments or collecting the plates after snack time. Children are happy and relaxed as they learn to share and take turns. They are confident and self assured as they become settled into the daily routine and enjoy taking their turn to sing a familiar song or describe what shape they are holding, to the rest of the group. A good behaviour management policy ensures appropriate strategies are used and staff work closely with parents to make sure home routines are followed.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is good. Each child has their own key worker who makes themselves known to the parents and discusses how the children are getting on, what they have been doing and how they behave. Written policies and procedures and regular newsletters keep parents informed of current themes being worked on and any forthcoming events. Nursery education is explained well in the 'Welcome Pack' given out to all parents and each area of learning is itemised so parents understand exactly what their children are learning. Parents provide staff with written details of their children's general character and abilities, so that familiar experiences, interests and needs can be used as starting points for subsequent teaching and learning. Parents are warmly invited to join the group at any time to help out or accompany their child on an outing or serve on the committee. This involves parents in the life of their child at preschool.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management within the setting is good. Children benefit from being supported by a qualified and experienced manager who works closely with the staff team to develop the quality of service provided. There is a strong commitment to good practice and a good understanding of the learning outcomes for children. All staff update their knowledge and skills by accessing further training courses, thus enhancing the children's general care and development. Staff are committed to making the children's learning experience as interesting

and stimulating as they can and children are monitored closely so that any extra help or guidance can be introduced as required.

Children are relaxed and happy in this well organised, lively, learning environment. The organisation of space, activities and equipment enables children to access a variety of play experiences very easily. Children's health, safety and progress is promoted and managed well because records are kept correctly and updated regularly. A good balance of active and quiet play, in large and small groups, promotes children's learning and progress in all areas of development.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider was asked to amend particular documentation in line with National Standards.

This has now been completed satisfactorily, which serves to protect the children's safety and security.

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 complaint 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):

- ensure fresh drinking water is available at all times
- ensure all children are familiar with the emergency evacuation 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):

- extend children's self-help skills at snack time

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