

St Joseph's Pre-school Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	204386
Inspection date	11 October 2007
Inspector	Tina Anne Mason
Setting Address	The Old School Building, Scratton Road, STANFORD-LE-HOPE, Essex, SS17 8DH
Telephone number	07889 900510
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Registered person	The Trustees of St Joseph's Pre School Playgroup
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 Josephs Pre-School opened in 1998, it operates from a hall in a converted school in Stanford-le-Hope in Essex. The pre-school mainly serves the local area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00 and 13:00 until 15:30. The pre-school is closed on Tuesdays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 47 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. 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 six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment where staff have good routines in place to support children's health. For example, tables are frequently cleaned and very good systems are in place to monitor the cleanliness of toilets and washbasins. Children learn independence in managing personal hygiene because staff support them well, such as ensuring soap, water and paper towels are easily accessible within the play room as well as in the cloakroom. Documents relating to the health and well-being of children, such as records of accidents and of medicines administered, are well maintained. Staff implement the clear sickness policy effectively in order to prevent the risk of illness and cross-infection. At least half the staff team have appropriate first aid qualifications.

Children enjoy snack times, which are used very well to promote independence. For example, children confidently select from a choice of breads and crackers and choose from a selection of toppings which they spread themselves. Staff support this well, for instance ensuring that drinks are available in jugs to enable all children to pour for themselves. Drinking water is made available by the request of children, although fresh water is not freely available at all times for children to help themselves when they need to quench their thirst.

Children move with confidence and control because they take part in daily activities that promote the use of large muscles and physical co-ordination. Children enjoy the health benefits of fresh air because they play outdoors most days. The children use indoor and outdoor equipment to develop their skills and can manoeuvre wheeled toys safely. They are learning to throw and catch different objects, for example bean bags, hoops and balls. As they develop their confidence and agility, their physical skills are extended using a wider range of equipment, such as, climbing and balancing equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from an extremely welcoming and child-friendly environment. The pre-school is bright and organised into a variety of play and learning areas that provide interest to children, for instance a well-equipped role play area and a cosy book corner. Excellent use is made of the large enclosed outdoor area to extend the range of daily activities. Children choose to play indoors or outside according to preference, and make extremely good use of the extensive range of toys and equipment available to them. Very good routines are in place to check and maintain all resources, ensuring they continue to be safe for children to use.

Good daily routines keep children safe. Staff are security conscious and ensure the premises are not accessible to others while children are present. Children learn simple and effective rules that support their safety, for example they are always reminded not to run indoors, this means they move safely between different areas of the pre-school as necessary. Children learn basic road safety through the good use of outdoor equipment. For example, a roadway is set up with a round-a-bout and zebra crossing when children use the bikes and other wheeled toys and they take part in regular fire drills, thus developing an awareness of personal safety issues. The setting has effective procedures in place to keep children safe on outings.

Children's safety and well-being is further supported by the good child protection knowledge of the staff team. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children from abuse and neglect, and there are clear procedures to follow should they have concerns. The child protection procedures are shared with parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a good variety of activities that are interesting and promote their development. They are confident and eager participants who respond well to the good opportunities to make choices about what they do. They freely select toys and equipment, and choose whether to play indoors or outside. Staff have a good understanding of children's development and promote a child-centred environment where children learn through play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning.

Staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they implement this confidently. Planning is thorough and ensures that children receive a consistently wide variety of learning experiences in all areas. Learning objectives for children are identified in relation to the early learning goals. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored very well. Staff use their good knowledge of individual children most effectively, for instance discussing children's individual needs at staff meetings and ensuring that activities are adapted to meet the abilities and interests of children present. Staff make good ongoing observations of children as they participate in activities and these are used well in updating children's individual progress records. All monitoring records are regularly updated and well maintained so the good progress children make over time is clearly reflected. Some children, particularly those who need additional support, have individual plans where staff identify specific learning objectives, and these are comprehensive.

Children are confident and eager participants in learning. They happily enter the setting and seek out friends and explore activities. They confidently choose resources and organise and extend their own play. They enjoy taking responsibility and respond well to the high expectations in the setting. For example, children know they can use any resources as long as they put them away afterwards; they enjoy playing at the free choice table, where the children are able to self select an activity to play with. Children's communication skills are very good, they use a wide vocabulary as they share their thoughts and ideas. They happily talk about their homes, their families and their pets, and are eager contributors to group discussions. Children are developing extremely good writing skills. All children are confident mark makers and enjoy writing in a variety of contexts, such as taking phone messages in role play. Most children are able to recognise and form some letters, with some children clearly writing their whole names as they label their art work and pictures.

Children are developing a good understanding of mathematical concepts and use these well in different contexts. They count well because staff encourage them to do so at every available opportunity and some children confidently count purposefully up to 20. Recognition of numerals is good, for instance when playing in the garden children who wish to ride a bike are given a piece of paper with a number on it, the children then have to wait for this number to be called before they can ride on the bikes. One of the children was given the number four, to which he

quickly said 'my age is four and I have got four'. Children also quickly identify the numbers that make up the date on the calendar; they confidently point to specific numerals when asked. They confidently calculate the total when 'one more' is added and use their simple calculation skills in practical applications, such as, when looking at how many chairs are around the table at snack time and estimating 'how many more' will be needed to ensure all the children have a chair to sit on. Children learn well about the wider world and enjoy exploring the natural environment. They thoroughly enjoy the regular planned experiments which encourage them to investigate and enquire about how things work, and benefit equally from the good use staff make of impromptu opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them. For example, spiders webs in the garden area sparkled on the day of the inspection due to the heavy fog and dew, photographs were taken and lots of conversation about patterns and the weather took place which captured the children's interest. Children's understanding and use of everyday technology is good. They confidently use a variety of programmable toys, such as remote control vehicles and interactive resources, and equipment such as cameras, calculators, computer and phones.

Children make good use of the variety of creative media freely available for them to express their thoughts and ideas. They use paints, crayons, recycled materials and different fabrics as they create their own pictures, models, collages and designs. They talk to staff about what they use and what they are making, discussing the texture of the different materials as they stick them together, and talking about the different colours they are using. Children are enthusiastic participants in a very good variety of musical activities. For example, the children use chop sticks to tap to the beat and follow the pattern of a beat made by a member of staff. They also enjoy listening to different types of music and talk about how that piece of music makes them feel. They sing and play musical instruments with vigour and enjoyment, and they engage in regular activities that encourage them to express themselves in dance and by moving their bodies to music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are confident and show high levels of self-esteem. This is because staff provide an inclusive environment where the individual needs of children are met very well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are enabled to participate fully because staff adapt activities according to need. Children are well behaved and respond well to the consistent praise and encouragement they receive from staff. They know daily routines and ground rules and enjoy being helpful, for example helping to organise snack time. Children are polite and well mannered and this is promoted well. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the setting's procedures regarding behaviour management and implement these well.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered. Children learn about aspects of their own and others' cultures and communities. They develop an awareness of difference and diversity, for example through learning about each others' cultural traditions, and by learning simple sign language and using this in everyday routines, such as at register time.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers are encouraged to be involved in the setting, for example serving on the committee, assisting with practical tasks, and volunteering to help in sessions. Parents and carers are well informed about their children's care and notice boards and newsletters are used effectively to keep them updated about current activities. Staff develop good relationships with parents and carers and good sharing of

information supports the consistency of care for children. Parents and carers receive some written information about the Foundation Stage but there is not a formalised method for sharing the planning and structure of the activity programme that relates to the six areas of learning. Parents and carers who gave verbal feedback were very enthusiastic and extremely happy about the care and education their children receive. They value staff's professionalism and commitment and the systems in place to keep them fully informed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Effective employment policies ensure that staff working with children are suitable to do so, and appropriate induction for staff ensures they are familiar with routines and procedures that support children's care. Ratios are very good, providing children with high levels of adult support. Regulatory documents that underpin the care and well-being of children are generally clear, for example records of accidents and medicines administered, and registers that show when children are present. Policies and procedures are clear and support the good practice of staff, for example the safeguarding children policy.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. The committee and staff team show a commitment to children's learning and development, and the staff team use training opportunities well to develop and update their skills. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is monitored and staff's knowledge of individual children is used well in ensuring that activities provide appropriate levels of challenge.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for which they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to continue the good practice of staff's professional development through training and appraisals. Staff receive yearly appraisals and a high level of training courses have been attended by all members of staff, which helps to support children in their all-round development.

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 are provided with fresh drinking water 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):

- maximise partnerships with parents and carers to meet the needs of the children, including details of long, medium and short term planning and information about the educational programme.

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