

St Francis Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	103842
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Clare Stone
Setting Address	The Vicarage, Galahad Avenue, Rochester, Kent, ME2 2YS
Telephone number	01634 301188
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Registered person	St Francis Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 Francis Pre-school is a committee run group. It opened in approximately 1968 and currently operates from one main room and a room on the second floor. It is situated in a residential area in the town of Strood.

A maximum of 32 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 08:30 to 15:00 apart from Wednesday, when it opens from 08:30 to 11:30, school term time only. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 61 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 33 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a mainly local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties.

The pre-school employs nine staff. Seven of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about good personal hygiene. They are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before they eat. Children's health is effectively promoted because the staff are well informed about the children's medical matters and provide good support for individuals. Most staff hold a current first aid certificate so are able to administer first aid in the event of an accident. All staff said they would seek emergency treatment if needed and have written permission to do so. This ensures children's welfare in the event of a serious accident where parents and emergency contacts are not available.

Children benefit from healthy snacks throughout the day. This includes fruit, raw vegetables and toast. Children are also given the opportunity to spread their own butter and toppings. This helps promote children's independence and self help skills. Children can help themselves to drinks whenever they are thirsty and staff encourage them to drink plenty in warm weather to prevent dehydration.

Under threes are developing warm relationships with the staff who are responsive to their needs. Staff are aware that some of their children need extra support and are always available to reassure and comfort the children in their care.

Children enjoy a good range of energetic play. They have access to a large outdoor space and the staff ensure that the children use this regularly. Children show good co-ordination when riding their bikes and scooters. They also respond enthusiastically during music and movement sessions. Children's fine motor skills are developing well as staff give the children plenty of access to paintbrushes and glue sticks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and caring environment with displays of children's work showing that staff value children's contributions. Children benefit from playing in a spacious well organised environment. This allows them to move around and play safely. They have easy and safe access to a good range of toys and resources appropriate for their age.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures. Staff record risk assessments and plan outings ahead to ensure the children's safety. There is a visitors book to record who is on site at all times and staff have good procedures in place for who is collecting the children. Children develop a good awareness of safety through well planned topic work, such as practising road safety and visits from the 'lollipop' lady. All resources are checked on a regular basis and removed and replaced if damaged. This ensures the children's safety within the setting.

Staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and possible signs of abuse. They are fully committed to protect the children in their care and make this clear in their policies and procedures. The policy reflects current legislation and includes what to do if there is an allegation made against a member of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and relaxed. They are developing good relationships with their peers and the setting has a harmonious feel. Staff ensure the children receive lots of praise and encouragement. This helps build children's self esteem and confidence.

All children have access to a good range of resources and can pick and choose what they want to play with. Younger children move around freely and settle in their own time. Staff have a good knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and use this to plan appropriate activities for the younger children. All children's achievements are recorded and staff use this information to plan an age appropriate curriculum.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff know the Foundation Stage curriculum well and plan an effective range of activities covering the six areas of learning. The records are detailed and show good evidence of where the children are in their development and how the staff can move them forward. All staff feed into the plans helping ensure their key children's needs are being met. Staff are good at using open questions which helps children organise their thoughts. The planning is thorough and includes differentiation to cater for all the children's different stages of development.

Children are developing good relationships and get on well with their peers and adults. They confidently approach staff for support, indicating good trusting relationships are being built. Children are beginning to understand differences in their lives to others around them. They talk happily about their home life and family.

Children speak openly to each other and are confident to talk during circle time. They express their ideas and experiences well using good vocabulary. Children have some access to paper and pens throughout the day. However, these are to be extended to expand children's opportunities for mark makings.

Children can count confidently and are beginning to recognise numbers that are important to them. They can recognise a group of three objects without counting. Children's understanding of space and shape are developing well. Staff also support the children by using mathematical language during free and adult led activities. Children played in the water and talked about boats that were heavy and light. This helped organised their thoughts when discussing floating and sinking.

Children play listening and guessing games that encourage them to explore objects and sounds. They are confident in using the computer and enjoy trying out their mouse skills. Staff plan interesting and fun home corner themes and often follow the children's suggestions. Children are beginning to understand past and present. They also discuss people, places and events in their own lives.

Children use their senses in a variety of ways. They enjoy cooking, smelling food, listening to music and feeling many different textures. Staff like the children to express themselves through a range of mediums and plan activities such as drawing, painting and collage. With all these activities in place children are making good progress in all areas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are treated with respect and valued as individuals. Staff recognise that all children are different and encourage them to express themselves. Children have access to resources which provide positive images of race, gender, culture, religion and disability. They also celebrate festivals from around the world to help children understand and accept other cultures. This ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered.

Children with learning difficulties are welcomed into the setting. Staff are keen to include all children in the planning and provide the correct care and support. Individual educational plans are kept and updated with the children's achievements. This ensures that all children are making progress at a pace that is suitable for them. The staff are happy to work with outside agencies and welcome any involvement with parents.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff use positive behaviour management technique and are good role models. Staff work together with parents with any behaviour issues and the policy reflects this. Children are learning to share and take turns in a calm and positive environment.

Partnership with parents is good. All parents receive good information about their children. There is a good two-way flow of information and parents can access a lot of information from the parents' notice board or newsletters. Staff give out Foundations Stage packs to parents to help inform them of what their children will be doing and how they can help. There is a keyworker system in place, and parents know who to speak to if they have any concerns. All policies and procedures are in place on the notice board for parents to read.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from this well organised and structured setting. The committee support the staff and the setting offers a good standard of care for the children. All staff have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities and work well as a team. As a team they constantly evaluate their practice and strive to improve.

There are good procedures in place for appointing new staff and checks are made on their suitability to ensure they are safe to work with children. All documents are in place and well maintained. Policies and procedures are up to date and in line with current legislation. The manager supports the staff and encourages them to attend regular training. This helps them promote good outcomes for children. The staff are aware of confidentiality and store their records accordingly.

Clear aims show a commitment to providing good quality care. Staff hold regular meetings to discuss planning and all contribute to in house training. There are formal appraisal systems in place to ensure that staff can celebrate their strengths and work with support on areas of improvement. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable

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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education

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 opportunities for children to practise their writing skills (also applies to care).

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