

St Lawrence Playgroup & Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	109848
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Inspector	Alison Jane Kaplonek
Setting Address	Vicarage Hill, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 2BY
Telephone number	01420 82442
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Registered person	St Lawrence Pre School
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Lawrence Pre-school is a voluntary group run by a parent committee and has been registered since 1974. It is registered to provide sessional care for up to 26 children aged two to five years. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term time, offering morning and afternoon sessions. Sessions run from 09:15 to 11:45 Monday to Friday and 12:45 to 15:15 on Tuesday afternoons. Currently there are 24 children on roll, of these 16 are in receipt of nursery education funding. The group provides support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with English as an additional language.

The group operate from a church hall and have access to the main hall, kitchen and toilets. The church grounds are used for outdoor activities.

The group employs four staff, all of whom hold Early Years qualifications. The setting liaises and receives teacher support from local schools. Support and advice is also received from the Early Education and Childcare Unit .

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's physical needs are sufficiently well met because staff follow sound procedures. They consult with parents about the children's health needs and keep appropriate documentation on site. Staff are all trained in First Aid and keep organised records of accidents or any medication which they administer. Children know when they need to wash their hands and are able to access tissues to wipe their own noses. They are provided with a varied range of healthy snacks, such as crackers, fruit and vegetable sticks. Children are offered drinks during the sessions.

Children develop physical control, experiment with movement and improve their manipulative skills during a satisfactory range of activities, such as parachute games, climbing and balancing. They are gaining an awareness of the space around them as they move between activities and are aware of others as they play with the train track on the carpet area. Children use a range of equipment, tools and materials safely as they paint, stick and draw.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an acceptably safe and secure environment where entry to the building is monitored. Children are safeguarded by staff who follow effective procedures, such as supervising the children when they use the communal toilets. Children and staff are familiar with the fire evacuation procedure which they practise each term. Staff ensure that they make satisfactory use of the available space to enable children to move freely and safely between activities, accessing a range of toys and play materials. Visual risk assessments are carried out each day before the session starts, as the building is often used by other groups.

Children are protected by staff who have a satisfactory understanding of child protection procedures and keep local contact numbers accessible. They display information about local child protection procedures on the parents notice board. There is a policy available for both staff and parents to see, although it does not include information about how staff will deal with any allegations made against them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Staff provide a range of resources and activities linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum, although plans do not show clearly what children are expected to learn. Children choose from painting, books, dough, puzzles or completing a simple programme on the computer. They form reasonably good relationships with the staff and enjoy sitting together to draw pictures or have their snack.

NURSERY EDUCATION.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate.

The pre-school environment is laid out in a few learning areas, such as a role play and book corner or floor play on the carpeted area. Children help themselves to resources and enjoy

dressing-up or playing in the igloo. Some incidental learning takes place as they count at registration time or talk about the animals they can see in the story book. However, staff lack the knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn to enable the children to make sufficient progress in all areas of learning. They often provide activities which are inappropriate for the children's age or stage of development, such as sitting and writing their names or completing worksheets. Plans cover the six areas of learning, but do not show clear learning objectives for activities, or how they will be adapted to provide challenge for the older or more able children. Many assessment records are inaccurate and are not used to inform future planning.

Children all enjoy listening to stories and contribute to discussions at circle time. Some children recognise their names as they look for their place at snack time and some can write recognisable letters. Children enjoy drawing and mark making as they sit together with staff. There is little evidence that children learn the sounds and shapes of letters or develop their writing skills during their play. Children count confidently, often above 10. They are able to talk about how many children and adults are present and older children can work out that there are more children than adults, using the mathematical language of more than and less than. There is little evidence that children learn about shape, space or measure.

Children confidently talk to staff about their families and friends. They take part in cooking activities and many are able to complete simple programmes on the computer. They construct and build and enjoy using the tape to wrap their pretend Christmas presents, before they send them down Santa's shoot. Children have opportunities to explore colour or texture as they paint and enjoy listening to the sounds made by different musical instruments. They confidently squash the dough and use scissors to cut it up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children are all treated with respect and their individual care needs are met by staff who include and value all children. Children are often praised and are beginning to gain in confidence and self-esteem. Some of the older children are learning to share and take turns with resources. Children are beginning to understand the routine of the sessions and become involved in the life of the pre-school, for example, helping to tidy up. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language are also welcomed and included at the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is inadequate. They can access information about the pre-schools daily routine and topics from the notice board and newsletters. They find staff approachable and talk to them as they collect their children at the end of the session. However, they have little involvement in their children's learning and information regarding their child's progress is often inaccurate. They know how to make a complaint but records are not confidential and do not show any actions taken as the result of a complaint being made.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are never left with unvetted adults and all visitors are asked to sign in as they arrive on the premises. Staff are appropriately qualified and have attended some short courses provided by their local authority. Adult to child ratios are maintained and staff work directly with the children. Appropriate essential records such as names, addresses and emergency contact details

are kept for all children. Children are ticked off on a registration sheet as they arrive at the pre-school, but not as they leave, and this record does not always show the accurate number of children on site.

Leadership and management is inadequate.

There is a clear management structure in the pre-school and assistants are supported in identifying their training needs. However, the registered person does not ensure that the regulatory body is informed of any changes or that supervisory staff are appropriately supported to fulfil their role within the pre-school. There is no system in place to monitor or evaluate the provision for nursery education. As a consequence, children are cared for in an environment where teaching lacks challenge and they are making insufficient progress in their learning. Management have made little or no improvement since the last inspection. Overall, the pre-school does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the pre-school were asked to develop a system for obtaining parental consent and recording long term medication. This is now in place.

They were also asked to ensure that the behaviour management policy contains a statement on bullying. There is now a separate bullying policy in place.

The pre-school were also asked to ensure that the child protection policy contains a procedure if a staff member is accused of abuse. This has not been included in the new policy.

They were asked to ensure the complaints procedure and policy has correct up to date information. Complaints are now being logged, but records are not confidential and do not show any follow up action taken.

To improve the provision for nursery education, the pre-school were asked to ensure all staff have a sound understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones and especially the program for mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. No improvement has been made.

They were also asked to ensure that planning has sufficient detail to enable staff to be aware of the activity objectives, how it will be adapted to provide challenge for more able children and how staff will be deployed. No improvement has been made.

Complaints since the last inspection

A concern was raised with regard to a complaint made directly to the provider by a parent. The complaint to the provider related to Standard 2: Organisation, which includes meeting children's needs effectively and Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers.

Ofsted investigated this by making an unannounced visit on 14/11/2005, as a result an action was raised under Standard 12 regarding the requirement to improve the procedures for recording and dealing with complaints and introduce a system to maintain a record of all complaints. The provider remains registered.

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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- make sure that the registered person informs Ofsted of any changes and complies with all conditions of registration.
- draw up an action plan to show how supervisory staff will be supported in their development.
- make sure that registers are completed accurately as children arrive and depart.
- ensure that the record of complaints remains confidential and includes any action taken as a result of a complaint being made.
- ensure that documentation regarding child protection includes how to deal with any allegations made against staff.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- increase staff knowledge and understanding of all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn to enable them to provide a range of stimulating activities which are age and stage appropriate for all children.
- ensure planning has sufficient detail to enable staff to be aware of the learning objectives and how to adapt activities to provide challenge for the older or more able children.
- ensure observations and assessments are accurate and that they are used effectively to inform future planning.
- ensure that accurate information about planning and children's achievements is shared with parents and that they are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning.
- draw up an action plan to show how the provision for Nursery education will be monitored and evaluated.

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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