

St Johns Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	118576
Inspection date	18 October 2007
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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 Johns Pre-school opened in 1980. It operates from a large church hall, it is purpose built and comprises of a kitchen, storage room and children's toilets. A very small enclosed garden adjacent to the hall is used for outside play. The setting is situated in Rainham, in the London Borough of Havering, in a residential area close to local amenities.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00.

There are currently 85 children aged from two years to four years on roll. Of these children 42 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has good systems in place to support children with special needs and for children who speak English as an additional language.

Two full-time and four part time members of staff work with children. Five staff have an early years qualification to NVQ Level two or three and one member of staff is working towards a level two qualification. The setting is an 'Accredited Pre-school Group', they have been

accredited by the Pre-school Learning Alliance for the provision of quality education and care in accordance with the standards of the Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are clearly learning ways they can keep themselves healthy. They confidently explain why they need to wash their hands before eating and routinely wash their hands after going to the toilet using the liquid soap and paper towels provided. Hygienic nappy changing facilities are in place and provide privacy as the door to the area can be pulled to. Staff use disposable gloves, aprons and wipe down the changing mat with anti-bacterial spray between uses. Children benefit from good routines put in place by staff, who ensure the environment is clean and well maintained. Staff clean the large hall and the play resources to reduce the risk of germs and infection. All tables are wiped down with anti-bacterial spray before and after eating. Most staff are first aid trained so able to deal with any accidents should they occur and a well stocked first aid box is located in the playroom. Children are protected because staff follow clear procedures in the event of an accident. Parents are informed about the sickness policy and provide written consent for the pre school to seek emergency treatment if there is a serious accident or emergency.

Children enjoy healthy snacks and know that fruit and vegetables are good for them. Children bring a lunch box from home each day with a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables for their individual snacks. They are able to independently access fresh drinking water and milk throughout the session. They learn to select their own clean cups, pour their own drinks and put the dirty cups in the correct place.

All children take part in physical activity on a daily basis. Good use is made of the large spacious hall for children to access a wide range of apparatus and resources which encourage them to balance, climb and jump in a safe environment. Children enjoy dancing and moving to music and enthusiastically take part in action songs such as 'I'm a little teapot' and 'If you're happy and you know it'. The small garden is well situated adjacent to the premises, with double doors leading out from the hall. In the garden there is a good range of equipment which provides opportunities for children to safely engage in physical activities, for example, cars, bats and balls. However, during the winter time staff bring this equipment indoors and access to outdoor play is limited, but this does not impact on meeting the physical needs of the children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome in a child friendly environment. Various colourful pictures and posters are displayed around the hall and a selection of resources are set out for children each day. The setting is well organised to enable children to move around safely and independently. Children enjoy their play in a safe and spacious environment where staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments at the beginning of each session, to reduce potential hazards, any action is logged and evaluated appropriately. The small outdoor area is fully enclosed and staff check all areas for safety before children play.

Children are consistently reminded how to keep themselves safe when playing because staff provide clear explanations and gentle reminders. For example, adults will talk to the children

about getting a mop to wipe up water to 'make sure no-one slips over'. Each member of staff monitors a specific area in the setting and takes full responsibility for the maintenance of the resources in that area. This ensures that any safety issues are addressed appropriately and as soon as possible. Staff work well as a team to support the children's well being as they rigorously ensure appropriate cover when they tell each other if they are leaving the room or seeing to a particular child.

Children have easy access to a wide range of stimulating resources that are well maintained and developmentally appropriate for their ages and stages of development. Toys and resources are rotated on a regular basis, to provide variety, and children are able to ask for toys they wish to play with that are not readily available.

The security of the setting is very effective as there are established procedures for the safe arrival and departure of the children. Children and staff practice the emergency evacuation procedures twice a month, to include morning and afternoon sessions. This helps children become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. The drill is comprehensively logged and fully evaluated to identify any weaknesses and to improve the procedures if necessary.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures in practice when necessary. Most staff have attended child protection training. A well written child protection policy is in place and includes a procedure to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff. Staff record any incidents or concerns confidentially. Their combined knowledge and effective child protection procedures promote and safeguard the children's welfare within the setting.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy their time at the preschool and are warmly welcomed on arrival and settle quickly. This indicates they feel comfortable and secure. Children are interested in what is available and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities.

Younger children are cared for in the afternoon sessions. This ensures that the staff team are able to adapt the activities to make them more suitable for the ages and abilities of the children who attend.

The stimulating activities provided help children progress in all areas of development. They are encouraged to explore and experiment independently while being provided with an appropriate level of adult support. Their creative and imaginative development is encouraged through activities such as painting and play dough, arts and craft, dancing and singing. Children have built up good relationships with staff and show they feel safe in the environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use good questioning techniques to stimulate thought and to challenge the children. The adults provide good role models and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning by presenting activities in an interesting and enthusiastic manner. Children are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas through positive interaction. They confidently talk about their families in small and large groups and sit quietly,

when necessary. For example, they enthusiastically talk about their pets and share their news and opinions during circle time.

Staff have a very good understanding of the foundation stage. They gather information from parents to help them assess the children's starting points and observe the children during free and focussed activities to assess their achievements and progress. This helps to identify children's stage of learning and allows staff to plan the next steps in each child's learning. Staff work together very effectively to ensure all children have regular observations. They have devised systems to ensure that suitable activities are planned to help individual children move along the stepping stones. Daily plans effectively cover all areas of learning and the activities provided relate closely to the written planning.

The children are beginning to represent numbers using their fingers when singing songs and to count to ten, and sometimes beyond. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations and understand the concept of simple additions when they are asked to add children as they join the circle at registration. Their understanding of shape and measure is also developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and more complex solids, when they take part in a 'shape people' activity, and use lots of mathematical language during free play activities. They weigh food during role play activities and understand concepts such as heavier, lighter and more than.

Children have access to paint and water play and enjoy modelling with play dough, they use musical instruments and sing, listening to music cd's, exploring sound and rhythm. Children use the computer with support from staff and have access to a range of programmable toys. They learn about cultures and beliefs through celebrations such as Eid and Diwali, where they taste sweets, make candles and use paint and paper on the floor to depict fireworks. Play resources provide opportunities for children to learn about diversity and the wider community they live in. Colourful posters are displayed around the setting to reinforce numbers, colours and the alphabet, however, there are no posters displayed to reflect positive images of others in the community.

Children recognise names on cards when entering the setting and staff encourage them to sound the initial letters using phonics. Children are confident writers. They have many opportunities to write for a purpose and are able to recognise and write some letters correctly. Children are happy and responsive to each other, they show confidence at snack times, circle time and play times, and they behave well listening to staff and each other. Children are beginning to explore colour and texture when they take part in mixing colour activities. For example, staff place different colour paints on each hand and they explore the colours they make and the textures they feel.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children show a good attitude towards one another and are confident and self assured. They flourish in the preschool because they are well supported by staff who encourage them to become autonomous and competent learners. Children play well together, learning to share and take turns, and they negotiate this with confidence. They show genuine concern for one another and benefit enormously from the example set to them by the staff team.

Children learn to respect other cultures through enjoyable activities. They are introduced to culturally specific resources throughout their play. For example, they use Chinese bowls and woks when they role play. Toys and resources, such as puzzles and books reflect positive images of all aspects of society, including many representations of people with disabilities, and adults and children in non stereotypical roles. This means children learn to acknowledge and accept differences.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are positively welcomed into the setting. A very strong emphasis on meeting children's individual needs, regardless of their ability, means that the setting is extremely inclusive. Additional resources and support are provided to ensure that all children are able to participate fully in each sessions activities. Additional support staff are employed to ensure that all children are able to meet their full potential and benefit equally from the activities on offer. The staff team liaise fully with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are effectively addressed and resourced.

Children develop a secure sense of belonging and confidently take on responsibilities within the preschool, such as door monitor for toilet area, when getting ready for snack. Behaviour is good and children show high levels of independence, confidence and self esteem as staff continuously praise and value their achievements. All children and families, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and English as an additional language, receive good support from staff, enabling them to thrive and make progress.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff give high priority to establishing and securing the links between home and the preschool, ensuring parents are actively involved in their children's learning. Parents complete a very comprehensive form on entry that contributes to the initial assessment of establishing their child's starting points. Parents receive excellent information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Birth to three matters framework in their welcome prospectus, which helps them to understand how their child is developing and learning through play. Parents have access to their children's files and plans of activities and receive regular reports detailing their children's progress. Display boards explain about the Foundation Stage and weekly themes. They receive excellent levels of support in extending their child's learning at home, for example through practical play experiences and home link activity/comment books. Parents' are fully informed further at open evenings which provide additional opportunities for staff and parents to discuss children's progress and developments. The setting also have a website which parents can access and provides a link to Ofsted reports and tax credit information.

Parents are aware of the complaints procedure and know how to make a complaint about the provision if they wish to do so. Staff listen to parents' concerns and, where appropriate, adapt their policies and procedures accordingly.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children greatly benefit from being cared for by qualified and experienced staff who are very caring and enthusiastic and are acutely aware of their roles and responsibilities within the setting. They are a very well established team who know the children well and are committed to ensuring all children feel happy and secure. They work well together and clear communication and guidance helps them provide a consistently good level of care for all the children. Staff regularly attend a wide range of training to update their knowledge and understanding in all areas, courses include; child protection, curriculum planning, behaviour management, inclusive

play and speech and language. All required documentation regarding the care of children is in place, well organised and stored for confidentiality. Policies and procedures work well because staff implement them well in the daily care of children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of nursery education is good. The registered provider and manager monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage through supervisions, observations, staff meetings and reviews. Staff are well supported to continually reflect and improve their practice. They are knowledgeable about the Foundation Stage and use observations and assessments effectively to evaluate how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. The manager is fully committed to ensuring each child meets their full potential while at the preschool. She is supported by the local authority who provide advice and guidance as necessary and she has also sought to improve the service offered by achieving an accredited quality assurance kite mark.

Most staff are qualified to at least level two and have annual appraisals that identify strengths and weaknesses. They are able to attend ongoing training and workshops to ensure their knowledge of childcare remains up to date and appropriate. Staff are actively involved in the assessment of the quality of the provision. This enables them to fully understand the aims of the preschool and the registered provider's ongoing commitment to improve the level of care and education provided. Children are safeguarded as effective recruitment and induction procedures ensure that people who work with children are suitable to do so.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the preschool was asked to ensure that children's dignity and privacy are respected at all times and good hygiene practices are promoted when changing nappies. This has now been addressed and children's nappy changes take place in a separate room, using a nappy changing unit. The area is hygienic and provides privacy as the door to the area can be pulled to. Staff use disposable gloves, aprons and wipe down the changing mat with anti-bacterial spray between uses

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.

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 that children are able to contribute to displays regarding equality of opportunity, the celebration of diversity and the wider world (also applies to 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):

- provide additional opportunities to promote children's physical development by making greater use of outside play areas

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