

# St Joseph's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107057
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kay Roberts
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Joseph's Church Hall, Forest Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 3QT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 9147173
<b>E-mail</b>	stjoespreschool@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of St Josephs Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Joseph's Pre-School was established in January 1985. It is located in St Joseph's Catholic Church Hall, in Fishponds, Bristol. There is a Catholic infant and junior school adjacent to the premises. Children attending the pre-school are from the surrounding urban area, which has a mixture of private and social housing. It is managed by an elected parent committee and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The group operates in a large hall and two smaller rooms. To the front of the premises there is a small enclosed area suitable for outdoor play. At set times children also have use of the adjacent school playground. The group operates during term time, Monday to Friday, from 09.00 to 12.00. On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday there are afternoon sessions which run from 13.00 to 16.00. A lunch club operates between morning and afternoon sessions so that full day care is available. Registration is for a maximum of 24 children aged between two years 10 months, and five years. There are two intakes of children annually, in September and Christmas. At present there are 43 children on the register, 34 of whom are funded three year olds. A high proportion of children attending the group have English as an additional language. There are nine members of staff, seven of whom work directly with children, and of these six hold a relevant child care qualification.

Guidance on the education programme is provided by a teacher adviser from Bristol City Council. Some teaching is based on High Scope methods.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health and physical development is actively promoted. In summer the outdoor area duplicates the indoor learning environment and children move freely between indoors and outdoors. They are protected from the elements. In summer sun screen is applied and children wear hats. In winter children wrap up warm in coats, hats and gloves. Wellington boots and raincoats are always available. Children develop large muscle skills as they run around in the playground playing hide and seek. They balance as they walk along a chain and stretch from one stepping stone to another. Other children jump, two feet together, from one painted square to another. Children are excited and motivated to learn as they continue to take exercise indoors. They push around large cardboard boxes and drag other children around as they sit in a box. Children stretch high as they lift the boxes over their heads, whilst others crawl inside a box. Children have good physical skills as staff use a wide range of resources and follow a Fun Fit programme which encourages children in all areas of action, balance and co-ordination, for which they are rewarded with a badge and certificate. Children are aware that after exercise they get out of breathe and their heart beats faster.

When thirsty, children pour themselves a drink of water from a jug. Snack time is a social occasion as children sit with their key worker and discuss the school nativity play. They eat a healthy range of snacks and independence is maximised, for example, children cut up fresh fruit. Children understand what foods are healthy and those which are not. They learn about healthy eating as staff provide a positive example when they sit with children at lunch time and children participate in a range of planned activities, for example, visiting the local green grocer to purchase fruit and vegetables, and making fruit kebabs. During one healthy eating activity children were joined by a local member of parliament. There is a good procedure in place for managing special dietary requirements.

Children play in a clean environment. The risk of infection is minimised as the policy for excluding children who are sick is shared with parents, who are also informed of infections within the pre-school. Staff follow hygienic procedures, for example, using anti-bacterial spray to clean tables prior to children having food. Children learn the importance of hygiene through the daily routine and know they must wash their hands prior to snack. Their independence is maximised with the provision of a small step, so children are able to reach the wash hand basin, soap and hand drier by themselves. Children understand that they must use soap 'because otherwise germs will make them sick'. There are very safe procedures in place for managing both accidents and medication so that children's welfare is promoted.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children relax as they receive a warm welcome from staff. The premises are decorated and maintained to a high standard. The hall is inviting with well presented, bright, colourful displays of children's art work and photographs. Within the hall areas are sectioned off so that children have a large space for physical activity and a cosy corner for relaxation. Activities are organised in clearly defined areas with space between each so that children move around freely and those

engaged in play are not disturbed by their peers. Children confidently make informed decisions about what toys they play with as they select from the broad range of clean, safe resources which are stored in drawers labelled with both pictures and words. The range of exploratory items is particularly good and enhances children's learning. Each day the hall is organised in a slightly different arrangement so that children are encouraged to play with the full range of resources, rather than just going to one area. Children also benefit from having access to two additional rooms; one for whole group activities and a 'busy' room where children access a range of creative resources. Due to the wide range of resources in this area, the room can on occasions look cluttered. Children also have access to a small, hard surface area for outdoor play, as well as the school playground.

Children play in a secure environment and as there is a safe procedure for the arrival and departure of children, they do not leave unnoticed. Children are only released to authorised adults and are protected from people who have not been vetted. Children are well protected from harm and neglect as staff have a very good understanding of local safeguarding procedures, for which they receive regular training. The risk of children being involved in an accident is minimised as the high number of well informed staff are vigilant. On a daily basis staff monitor the environment to ensure there are no potential hazards, and use a check list so no area is forgotten. Accidents are regularly reviewed to identify potential patterns and there is a risk assessment in place. There is a very safe procedure for outings so that children are well protected. On outings to local shops children know they should use the zebra crossing to cross over to the other side of the road. Children learn how to protect themselves. Whilst children help to mop up the spillage of water they have made on the floor, staff explain that they should do this otherwise someone may slip. Children know how to handle tools, such as, knives and scissors, safely.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Children attending the pre-school have fun in the exciting environment and are reluctant to leave at the end of the session. Prior to commencing at the pre-school staff recommend that parents attend the toddler group so that children are already familiar with the environment and children receive a leaflet which explains the daily routine in picture format and includes a photograph of their key worker. Parents are invited to remain with children until they are sufficiently confident to separate. There is a staggered intake of children so that key workers can provide a high level of support and focus on children's specific interests.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and recognise the importance of working in close partnership with parents. Staff are enthusiastic about their work and know how to promote learning. They use children's interests and knowledge of each child's progress to devise individual play plans which are regularly reviewed. Staff effectively plan an extensive range of stimulating activities which cover all aspects of the curriculum. If children remain interested in one particular subject, the topic is expanded and may last a number of months thus providing children with more in depth knowledge. For example, having studied animals for a number of months, children who are interested are now looking at camouflage and size. Activities are well supported both in terms of staff and the range of resources. Staff seize every opportunity to help children learn from first hand experience, for example, as archaeologists children dug for bones in clay. After creating Christmas cards children walk to the post office to purchase a stamp and then post it

into the letter box. Some children are particularly interested in animals and others in transport, so all children go on a bus to visit a large pet shop.

Children are stimulated by the provision of open ended resources, such as, large cardboard boxes, which sustain the interest of most children for a considerable period of time. The boxes provide many learning opportunities. Children begin to appreciate size as they pack smaller boxes into larger ones and use mathematical language to describe size. They balance the boxes one on top of the other to create a tower. A number of children working together demonstrate good problem solving skills as they create a robot. Children are proud of their achievement, which is put on display and this is further reinforced as staff offer praise and take photographs. On another occasion children wear yellow helmets as they help staff to create a large stable for the baby Jesus, having just watched infant children perform their nativity play. Other children use a box to create a home for dinosaurs, which they later study with a magnifying glass.

Activities are child focussed, rather than being adult led, so that children become confident decision makers. Children show creativity as they design their own Christmas decorations. They use pencil control to draw and paint pictures which they then describe. Younger children enjoy the texture of paint as they daub it on paper then mix it with glue and afterwards paint their hands. Children are given the freedom to fully explore resources, for example, after hitting a cardboard box with a toy dinosaur they repeated the actions, interested in the sound it made. Children are given the time and opportunity to be independent and learn for themselves, such as, creating a railway track which joins. Children name two dimensional shapes and are beginning to use their fingers to represent numbers. More able children recognise written numerals and count beyond 10.

There is a good balance between children's free choice of activity, as well as small and large group activities. Large group activities are short in duration and involve active participation, so that children do not lose concentration. Children join in with the words and actions to Christmas songs and it is made more interesting as one member of staff plays a guitar. On other occasions when in a large group children have something specific to study. They are curious and want to see how the water turned to ice over night. Alert to their senses children comment that it is 'freezing' when they touch it with their hands. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the world as they suggest the ice be placed in the shade so it does not melt.

Children show a respect for books, carefully studying the pictures as each page is turned. They enjoy listening to stories and afterwards show they were attentive as they answer simple questions. Children recognise their name in print. More able children also recognise the names of their friends and simple road signs, such as, 'stop'. Children mark-make with a purpose in mind and more able children write their names. The constant interaction between staff and children, and the provision of exciting activities stimulates language so that children have very good communication skills. Children use language for thinking and in imaginary play. When playing alongside others engaged in the same theme they negotiate their role. Children form close friendships. They are keen to sit next to each other at snack time and move from one activity to another, together.

Familiar with information and communication technology children pretend to use a telephone, and explain what they have been doing the previous day. Children operate toy cash registers and laugh with delight when the drawer opens. They use simple computer programmes to draw pictures, selecting different colours and types of lines. Overall children make excellent progress; they have good communication skills, are social, confident, curious and motivated to learn.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school as staff value and respect their individuality. For example, the Christmas nativity play is enhanced by taking into consideration the needs of children who have English as an additional language. Staff are particularly good at supporting children with additional needs and ensure that they receive one-to-one support for part of each session. Children are confident as each achievement is acknowledged and staff listen to what they have to say. Activities focus on children's interests and are adapted to children's individual needs. Children have a sense of belonging and proudly point out their well presented art work and photographs. Staff have a proactive approach to behaviour management so that children are very polite and well behaved. They are considerate to each other and when one child's nose begins to run, another child wipes it for them. Children show a respect for the environment as they help to mop up spillages and after dropping the contents of a drawer on the floor pick up the items. They begin to appreciate the importance of recycling as they place varied items into different recycling bins and through discussion. Children are aware that they should turn off the tap after use so that water is not wasted. The importance of this is reinforced as children participate in a sponsored water carry when they walked to a fish made of bricks, to raise money to purchase two donkeys to carry water.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about the wider world. Pre-school children confidently join infant school children at play time and watch them perform a nativity play, so the transition from pre-school to school is less traumatic. After a visit to the local park where children planted bulbs around a tree, they were consulted about what facilities they would like to see as part of the regeneration of the area. On walks around the local community children count the number of different objects they see. Children visit the library, shops, parks and further a field on bus trips. Children develop a respect for nature as they gently hold and stroke animals in the pet shop. They learn about life cycles as they plant a range of flowers and tomatoes, and watch them grow. Children develop a positive attitude to difference as they follow the example of staff and have free access to resources reflecting images of diversity. Children learn about the cultures of others as special celebrations are acknowledged. For example, at the time of Chinese New Year children dressed up and acted out the dragon dance. They decorated envelopes and then blew kisses into them, and tried to eat rice and bean sprouts with chop sticks.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Children's education is greatly enhanced through effective communication and a close working relationship between parents and staff. Parents are fully aware of the education programme and understand the importance of child initiated activities. All parents are actively involved as they record what activities their child would like to do during the session. Parents are also involved by assisting at sessions, accompanying children on outings, participating in the library scheme and sharing their particular knowledge with children, such as, how Eid is celebrated at home. Parents have free access to their child's well presented monitoring folders and individual play plans, which include information as to how children's learning can be continued at home and are asked to inform staff of any interests children may have. Parents are also well informed about practices within the setting and are clear about expectations as there is a formal agreement between parents and the pre-school. Staff comment positively about the provision and say it is 'brilliant'.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide. There are rigorous recruitment procedures to check the suitability of staff to work with children. Ongoing suitability is checked via one-to-one meetings, appraisal, and mentoring. Effective communication systems ensure there is a consistency of approach and staff are clear about their role and responsibilities. The stable staff team and highly effective key worker system provide consistency of care for children. Keen to extend practices staff have undertaken a considerable amount of training since the last inspection relating to care, safety and the education programme. Keen to extend the provision staff have worked to achieve the Bristol Standard for Early Years. They actively seek the views of both parents and children and change practices accordingly. For example, as a result of consultation with children a larger space in the hall was allocated to physical activity. Staff are enthusiastic about their work and are well deployed so that children receive a high level of support. There are arrangements in place so that staff are able to take time away from the children to make observations, maintain documentation and undertake planning which greatly benefits the education programme. The highly effective planning cycle ensures that all children make excellent progress in all areas of learning, which is enhanced through good organisation of the environment and resources. Staff offer a bright, colourful, clean, safe, exciting environment. Comprehensive documentation is continually reviewed so that children's health, safety and welfare are actively promoted. Paperwork meets both the National Standards and regulatory requirements, is confidentially maintained and where appropriate shared with parents.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leader is well qualified and has achieved Early Years Professional status. She is able to motivate both staff and parents so that children's learning is maximised. There are clear monitoring systems in place to ensure that all children receive good quality education as potential weaknesses are quickly addressed through consultation with the staff team. For example, when it was determined that the discovery area was not being fully utilized this was discussed at a staff meeting and a decision made to make it more inviting by providing an enclosed space and new resources, so that it is now well utilised. The leader recognises that the key strengths are planning based on each child's interests and next stage of development, the very committed, knowledgeable staff team and quality resources. Plans for the future include placing more displays at a lower level and increasing the number of resources in dual language. The group are currently involved in a research funded project based on encouraging children to evaluate their own learning and sharing their discoveries with others, to see if they become more reflective in their learning and develop stronger learning dispositions.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Since the last care inspection in September 2004 the provider has made good progress against the two recommendations which were agreed. The environment is now more inviting for children as the building is regularly redecorated, particularly at lower level. New radiator covers have been fitted so that radiators no longer pose a risk to children.

The last education inspection was also in September in 2004 and the provider was asked to meet one point for consideration. The programme for communication, language and literacy has now been improved as children access the inviting book corner and staff are available to read children stories. There is also a book borrow scheme in operation so that parents can share books with children and children visit the local library.

## **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 outstanding.

### **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):

- review the 'busy room' so that it provides more freedom of movement and is more attractive to children.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)