

St Mary's Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	107637
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Inspector	Christine Jacqueline Davies
Setting Address	St. Mary 's Church Hall, 63 St. Mary's Road, London, SE15 2EA
Telephone number	020 7277 6255
E-mail	stmaryspreschool@hotmail.com
Registered person	The Trustees of St. Mary's Playgroup (Southwark)
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 satisfactory. 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 Mary's Preschool was registered in 1994 and is managed by a committee of local people and parents. The preschool is accommodated in a church hall situated in Peckham and serves the local community. The premises consist of a large hall and a group room. There is a small outdoor area for supervised play.

The preschool is open from 09:30 to 12:00, Monday to Friday, term time only. A maximum of 26 children aged from two years to under five years may attend the preschool at any one time. There are currently 26 children, aged from two years to under five years on roll. There are 19 funded three and four year olds attending the preschool. The preschool provides support for children who have a learning difficulty and/or disability and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are four staff who work directly with the children and are either suitably qualified or experienced. The preschool receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are clean and are suitably maintained. Children develop an awareness of hygiene practice, because staff encourage them to wash hands before eating snacks and after using the toilet. However, hygiene routines do not entirely reduce the risk of spread of infection, as children do not have access to separate towels when drying hands. Procedures are in place for administering medication; however, a record of medication is not in place, which is a breach of regulations. In addition to this prior written consent to administer medication, has not been obtained from parents, which means that children's welfare is not entirely safeguarded. A record of accidents is maintained and staff are first aid trained. This means that staff are able to respond to accidents appropriately, should an accident occur. Regular outdoor sessions, enable children to use a variety of large and small equipment, such as balls, the climbing frame, and bikes. So as a result, helps them to be fit and healthy. In addition to this, children benefit from eating healthy snacks, and participate in planned topic work about foods that are good for them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are secure in their understanding of child protection and effective procedures are in place to safeguard children. Children are cared for in a safe environment, because staff undertake daily risk assessments, to ensure that children are protected from harm. In addition to this, comprehensive written procedures are in place, which include, fire safety, health and safety and children who are lost or not collected. Toys are well organised, accessible and meet safety standards. Children are learning the importance of rules and boundaries to help keep them safe, such as helping to tidy away toys or using outdoor apparatus safely. Staff ensure that visitors sign in when entering the premises, but do not always record the arrival times of children attending the preschool. This is a breach of regulations. Furthermore, children may not be accounted for quickly in the event of an emergency, which means that children's welfare is not entirely safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children under three benefit from a flexible, varied routine and have a positive attitude to learning, helping to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Although staff have a sound understanding of how children learn and are familiar with the Birth to three matters framework, the framework is not currently used to inform planning for children under three. This means that children's learning and developmental needs may not always be met fully. Despite this, children choose from a good selection of freely accessible activities and enjoy daily outdoor physical play. Creative activities such as, painting, collage and messy play, help to promote children's self-expression. Children enjoy group sessions where they can listen to stories or sing familiar songs, helping to promote their language development. Children explore their environment with enthusiasm and benefit from a good balance of adult and child initiated activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation stage, which enables children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff plan activities in advance and are clear about the learning intentions. In addition to this, children's progress is recorded via observations; however, children's profiles do not clearly identify how children's progress is tracked or how future learning will be extended. Despite this, staff have created an environment which promotes children's independence and autonomy. Staff ensure that provision is low level and clearly labelled, which allows children to pursue their own interests. Staff use good questioning techniques during play, which enables children's learning to be extended. Children have many opportunities for uninterrupted play, which ensures that there is minimal disruption to their learning. Children are steadily developing their social skills and many have formed close, preferred friendships with their peers.

Children have access to a good selection of resources that support mathematical learning. Resources such as games, puzzles, construction and a variety of equipment for sorting, measuring and exploring pattern, help children to consolidate a range of mathematical concepts, through everyday practical experiences. In addition to this, children have opportunities to see and use numbers around the setting and are able to see the different ways in which numbers can be used. For example, staff have created a display of numbers on the wall. However, staff do not regularly introduce specific mathematical vocabulary during children's play.

Staff have created a dedicated graphics area, which enables children to have access to a variety of materials. Children are able to see many examples of print in their environment. For example, alphabet charts, as well as, their own attempts at writing. The book area is well organised and books are easily accessible to children. Children's phonological awareness is supported through the use of rhymes and games such as lotto. In addition to this, a variety of props such as the telephone, and puppets, help children to extend their use of language. Children handle books with confidence and respond with enjoyment to their favourite stories and songs. Children have many opportunities to explore and experiment with materials such as playdough, sand and water, which contribute to their creative development. Regular visitors from the local community to the setting, enable children to gain an understanding of the world around them. Children develop a sense of time and place, through the provision of role play and imaginative play resources such as play-people, cars and animals and learn about the change in seasons through planned topics and displays.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are settled and benefit from good relationships with staff and their peers. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are kind and considerate towards one another and benefit from clear rules and boundaries. So as a result, children behave well and their self-esteem is promoted. Children adopt a positive identity via a good range of resources reflecting diversity. Creative activities such as self portraits enable children to learn about themselves and others and develop a positive attitude about differences. Staff are committed to providing an inclusive environment and good systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff work in partnership with parents and ensure that individual education plans are used to set future targets. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents take part in their children's learning and have access to detailed information on the Foundation Stage curriculum. Regular communication through formal reviews, daily informal discussions and detailed notice boards, help staff and parents work together to help children make progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Systems are in place which ensure that staff are fully aware of their role and responsibilities. Children's welfare is promoted because rigorous vetting procedures are in place, ensuring that staff are suitable to work with young children. Regular meetings with staff ensure that practice issues are discussed and training needs are identified. Comprehensive policies and procedures help to promote children's overall safety and well-being. In addition to this, detailed records relating to children, are kept and stored confidentially. However, the attendance register has not been accurately maintained, a record of medication is not in place and prior written consent to administer medication has not been obtained from parents. This means that children's welfare is not entirely safeguarded. Space is organised well and kept free of hazards, helping to promote children's safety throughout the session. Activities for children are flexible and age appropriate, helping to meet the individual needs of children.

Leadership and Management of nursery education is good. A strong monitoring system is implemented by the management team, which ensures that staff deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum effectively. However, current assessment procedures do not fully demonstrate how children's progress is tracked over time. Professional development for staff is of a high priority and regular input from the early years advisory team, ensure that staff keep abreast of current developments, within nursery education and promote positive outcomes for children. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection recommended that the provider evaluate written assessments, to ensure that written plans reflect the individual needs of children and that the sick child policy and complaints procedure are reviewed. In addition to this, it was recommended that fire drills are carried out regularly, that the premises are refurbished and maintained at a suitable temperature and that Ofsted are informed of any relevant changes. Since the last inspection, the provider has reviewed assessment procedures and is currently updating them; however, written plans do not clearly identify individual targets for children. Fire drills are now practised regularly and recorded, and an updated complaints procedure and sick child policy are now in place and available to parents. The main hall used by the children has been repainted and staff ensure that the areas used by children, are maintained to a suitable temperature. There have been no significant changes to inform Ofsted about.

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 that suitable hand drying facilities are in place
- ensure that planning reflects the needs of children under three
- ensure that a record of children's hours of attendance is kept at all times
- ensure that a record of medication is in place and that permission to administer medication, is sought from parents

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):

- develop a system which clearly identifies how children's progress is tracked and reflects their individual abilities

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