

St. Joseph's Pre-School Play Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122610
Inspection date	30 October 2007
Inspector	Jane Lester
Setting Address	122A Ladbroke Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1LF
Telephone number	01737 772334
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Registered person	The Trustees of St Joseph's Play Group
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. Joseph's Play Group has been established in Redhill, Surrey since 1980. It operates from St Joseph's Church Hall, close to the town centre. The group serves the local community and surrounding areas and has close links with St. Joseph's Catholic Church. It is managed by a committee of parents. It mainly operates from one designated room but children also have access to a large hall and enclosed outside area.

A maximum of 28 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open from Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:15 to 14:45. Children may attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 53 children, aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 37 children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff who work with the children. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through everyday activities and routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack. Children enjoy the activities provided by dentists and nurses who visit the setting to reinforce messages about the importance of good personal hygiene. The rota is organised to ensure that there is always at least one member of staff who holds a current first aid certificate. This means they can give appropriate care if there is an accident.

Children benefit from a healthy diet of fresh fruit and vegetables. A newly introduced snack bar system means that children can access their snack according to their individual needs. Children learn about healthy eating through activities and discussions on the benefits of certain foods. Fresh drinking water is available to the children at all times with the additional option of milk at snack time.

Children's physical skills are promoted effectively through a range of indoor and outdoor activities which allow children to be active and develop their co-ordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safeguarded within the setting as the premises are secured during use and staff are deployed well to ensure their safe arrival and departure. Throughout the session staff continue to be deployed effectively and are vigilant about children's safety. Health and safety is given high priority and regular risk assessments identify and reduce hazards both indoors and out. The appropriate use of measures such as safety gates mean that children can move around safely and freely. Sensitive reminders such as not running in the room and the correct way to carry scissors increase children's awareness of everyday safety in the setting. Appointed fire marshals ensure that fire drills are practised with the children and equipment is checked regularly.

The good organisation of age appropriate toys and equipment means children can independently access available resources from tables, trays and boxes. Younger children attend in the afternoon and resources and activities are made available for them with safety in mind. Children's pictures, postcards and displays adorn the walls and foster a sense of belonging. Good use is made of the large hall for small group work or physical activities. The play group room is organised well to allow children to access table activities as well as larger construction activities on the carpet area. However, there is no provision of space or soft furnishings for children who wish to rest comfortably.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. The committee has established systems to ensure staff suitability and has obtained relevant checks on all staff. Staff attend training and are fully aware of the types of abuse and signs to look for. They show a good understanding of the procedure to follow should they have any concerns. However, the written

procedure lacks contact details and has not been updated to ensure it is in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

New children gain confidence through the effective use of a key worker system and a sensitive settling in process. Younger children attend a smaller group where excellent adult to child ratios ensure their individual needs are attended to. They form friendships with their peers and build strong relationships with the staff. Well planned, exciting activities and the daily routine offer children opportunities to make decisions, which boosts their self confidence and encourages independence. For example, children choose when to eat their snack and go independently to wash their hands in preparation. They make rockets of their own design and choose what colour paint to use to decorate it. Their achievements are highly valued and children are proud to point out examples of their work displayed around the room. Children are settled, make friends and enjoy their time at the setting. They benefit from good support from key workers who know their children well and adapt the planning to ensure activities are stimulating and promote their all-round development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy their time at pre-school and they achieve well because staff use their understanding of early years guidance to provide good quality nursery education. Planning is comprehensive and covers all areas of learning. Staff use on-going observations well to assess each child's stage of development and plan for their future development. Staff adopt a flexible approach to enable them to use children's interests to promote learning. They allow time for children to explore activities rather than being driven by the end product. For example, one child chooses not to make a three dimensional rocket but enjoys exploring the boxes and the qualities of paste. He chats happily about what food has been in the box and what he likes to eat, rather than choosing to paint his model. Another child's imagination is fired by the current theme on space and staff plan to adapt activities to capitalise on this. Staff make very good use of questioning and resources to encourage inquisitive minds and problem solving.

Staff use themes extremely well to offer cross-curricular learning. A book linked with the space theme is used as a basis for a variety of activities. Children sit engrossed as they listen to the story and props are provided to enable them to recreate and extend the story. A cardboard box becomes a space ship and some children sit for a long time, lost in their imaginative play whilst classical music plays in the background. Others practise dressing themselves as they put Wellington boots on correctly and move in different ways, taking moon steps like spacemen. They demonstrate good spatial awareness as they dance and swirl to music, twirling streamers round. A slide becomes a launch pad and children show the correct number of fingers as they count down to blast off.

Resources are used imaginatively to support all children's learning. In the role play corner, for example, numbered rockets hang on a line. The number printed on the rocket is reinforced both by a corresponding number of tactile streamers and by marks on the back. In this way, children can experience the number represented in a tangible way.

Children are generally making good progress towards the early learning goals. They are becoming confident in their use of numbers and can order them correctly up to five. Staff are skilful in

holding children's attention during story time and children choose books to look at after tidying up, although few children spontaneously access books from choice during the session. Children have plenty of opportunities to practise mark making and most hold pencils and brushes correctly. They recognise their written name and select their name cards for different activities. However, they are not encouraged to write their names and there are currently few opportunities to raise their phonic awareness. Children's physical development is good, they move confidently and safely gaining good control of small tools and equipment. Children use their imagination well in role and small world play and explore a range of craft and design activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Children learn to take care of each other and their resources. Positive behaviour is warmly praised and children respond well to signals such as the triangle which staff ring to request that they stop and listen. Children learn to consider the needs of others. They bring in items for Christmas boxes to be sent to children less fortunate than themselves and discuss how their own lives may differ.

Children develop an awareness of the local community by being taken out on walks within the local area and by having regular visitors into the pre-school, such as the daily parent helper. They learn about the wider world through tasting foods, exploring musical instruments and discussing other cultures through festivals. Staff use children's own experiences, for example, of fireworks, to help them understand other cultural celebrations. Children's backgrounds are acknowledged and celebrated. Parents are encouraged to be involved when children pretend to visit a different country each day and they share their culture through stories, poems and songs in their home language.

Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well, as are those children who speak English as an additional language. This is achieved through working closely with parents to ensure individual needs are met. Parents are kept well informed of all aspects of the provision through regular newsletters, notices and meetings. A policy folder is available for all to read. Notice boards maintained by both the parent committee and the staff provide useful information on all aspects of the setting. A poster displayed gives details of how they can contact the regulator about any concerns, however, the written complaints policy has out-of-date contact details and does not reflect all regulatory requirements.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents indicate they are very happy with the provision. They feel staff are approachable and they receive good information about the curriculum offered. When their child first starts they are invited to a parents' evening where staff demonstrate some of the activities offered and explain what children learn from these. Regular newsletters and the new website give ideas on how to extend their child's learning at home and support activities offered in the setting. In addition to an initial settling in report, parents receive a written report on their child's progress by means of a feedback profile at the end of the summer term. Daily communication between staff and parents ensures information is regularly exchanged and updated to support each child's welfare and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Good quality organisation enhances children's care. The welfare, care and learning of children are appropriately promoted by comprehensive policies and procedures. All are available for parents to keep them well informed. Children are registered as they arrive and a separate book is used to record the time of late arrivals, although the system has not yet been extended to take into account children who may be collected at a different time, or staff who work non-standard hours. Children are kept safe by the good range of well-completed documentation, which is up to date and stored on site in an accessible yet confidential manner. However, an absence book kept for auditing purposes compromises children's confidentiality.

Leadership and Management are good. Management and staff work well as a team and there is a shared commitment to early years care and education. The manager leads by example and is clear about her role. Staff performance is monitored and feedback shared to ensure they continue to offer good quality care and educational provision. Appraisals identify staff strengths which are utilised effectively. Training needs are highlighted and supported well. Staff are well trained and enthusiastic. Most of the staff have been in the setting for a number of years which provides children with stability and a wealth of experience. They are deployed effectively and communicate well to meet each child's needs. The setting is effective in identifying areas that could be improved and are proactive in seeking external advice and support. This has a positive impact on the care, learning and play provided. The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to address staff training needs with particular regard to child protection and promoting equal opportunities. The majority of staff are now appropriately trained and all are confident in these specific aspects. A variety of resources are now used effectively to promote children's awareness of diversity. The pre-school was also asked to implement an action plan detailing how at least one member of staff qualified in first aid would be available at any one time. A staff deployment sheet now identifies suitably trained staff and ensures that this requirement is consistently met. Lastly, the setting was asked to ensure that the premises were maintained at an adequate and comfortable temperature. Due to the layout of the building, it has been difficult to meet this recommendation fully despite seeking expert advice. However, the temperature is constantly monitored by staff and children are moved to the larger hall should it drop to an uncomfortable level. In addition, parents are made aware of the situation and asked to ensure their children are appropriately attired.

At the last nursery education inspection, the setting was asked to develop children's understanding of number and simple calculation by utilising learning opportunities during snack time. In response, a number table was set up to encourage children to discuss numbers and staff presented children with simple calculations, such as how many more cups were needed.

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 suitable provision for children to relax or rest safely
- review complaints procedure and child protection policy to ensure they include all necessary and up-to-date information
- ensure that system for registering staff and children reflects changes to normal hours of attendance and that absence book is maintained with regard to confidentiality

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 book area to make it more attractive to children (also applies to care)
- develop phonic awareness and offer regular opportunities for children to write for a purpose during the daily routine

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