

St. John Fisher R.C. Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	509078
Inspection date	05 November 2007
Inspector	Katie Dempster
Setting Address	80 Imperial Close, Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 7LW
Telephone number	020-8866-3629
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Registered person	The Committee of St John Fisher R C 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 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. John Fisher Roman Catholic Pre-School is an established group which has been running for more than 40 years.

It operates from St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church Hall and has the use of two rooms, one of which can be further divided. It is situated within walking distance of Rayners Lane and North Harrow stations, local bus routes, parks, shops and primary schools.

There are currently 28 children on roll. This includes 23 funded children. The group supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and multi-lingual children.

The setting opens five days per week during term time. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:30.

Seven part time staff work with the children, five are on duty at each session. Four staff have a recognised childcare qualification equivalent to NVQ Level 3. One member of staff qualified to NVQ Level 2 and is currently working towards Level 3. There are always at least two members of staff with a first aid qualification on duty. All Staff regularly attend LEA training as a part of their ongoing professional development.

The playgroup is run by a management committee and receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare partnership (EYDCP) and the Pre school Learning Alliance. The setting is accredited by the Pre School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from unnecessary illness as they do not attend if they are suffering from infections. They receive suitable first aid treatment in the event of an accident as all staff hold valid first aid qualifications. There is a good daily cleaning routine carried out by the church cleaning staff and both gloves and aprons are worn when attending to children's personal needs.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands after visiting the toilet, before lunch time and after messy play. There is a bowl of water and hand towels available in the main hall for children to wash their hands during the session, however, the water can become unclean relatively quickly as children wash their hands after messy play. Good written consent, accident and medication records are maintained. This ensures children receive appropriate care if there is an accident or if medication has to be administered.

Children are able to access drinking water throughout the day when they are thirsty. This ensures children have opportunities to develop their independence. They enjoy their lunch in a relaxed atmosphere with their friends, as a result, a social occasion is created. They are learning about healthy eating as staff talk to them about the healthy food they have in their packed lunch.

Children participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities. A small climbing apparatus and soft mats mean children have opportunities to develop their large motor skills as they run, jump, balance, crawl and slide. A range of activities are available to support children's hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. For example, they enjoy threading beads and playing with puzzles.

Children do not have access to an enclosed outside area, however staff regularly take children outside to the surrounding garden where they enjoy focused activities, for example, a nature trail, which staff then extend into further creative activities. This helps to consolidate children's knowledge and understanding. Staff are keen to develop an enclosed outside area to provide further play opportunities for all children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, welcoming and child-friendly environment. Staff greet children enthusiastically as they arrive, and make time to chat with parents. Activities are set out attractively and children are quickly engaged. Children's individual needs are met effectively as there is ample furniture for children to rest, eat and play comfortably. There is a good range of resources available to meet the needs of the children, they are clean and well maintained.

Children are kept safe and secure on the premises. Doors are locked after all children have arrived, any parents or visitors after that time have to then buzz the door or ring the setting's

mobile. Good thorough risk assessments are carried out by staff on a daily basis, to reduce possible risks on the premises. A clear fire evacuation procedure is displayed at various points around the setting and children experience regular fire drills. Staff are deployed effectively to maintain ratios and ensure children are supervised at all times.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as appropriate policies and procedures relating to safety are in place. Staff have received child protection training and are fully aware of their responsibilities in reporting concerns. A good child protection and safeguarding children policy is in place and includes action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. Children are safeguarded in the setting as they are cared for by staff who are appropriately vetted and experienced to care for them.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are making good progress in their development. Younger children are enthused by the activities, they are happy and interested to learn and explore. They develop their imagination in the home corner which has been set up as a grocery shop. Using pencils, crayons and paint children enjoy being creative as they join in art activities. Puzzles, building blocks and shape sorters are available for children to learn about problem solving. Younger children are starting to form close relationships with each other. For example, two children enjoy painting at the easels, they laugh and squeal as they paint together.

Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and implement this effectively within the setting. They refer to the framework for effective practice and use their observations to plan activities for the younger children.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. They plan a well-balanced curriculum which is linked to the stepping stones, helping children to make good progress in all areas of their development. All staff are responsible for children's learning as they have key areas to focus on. Staff make good use of observations which they implement into planning and use to recognise the next steps for children's individual learning. Staff use effective teaching methods to help the children make good progress, for example, open-ended questioning to encourage the children to think and help them develop a wider vocabulary.

Children are interested and excited. They are developing self-confidence and esteem as they express their own needs and views. For example, at the role play corner, they tell one another what fruits they would like and what they will use them for. Children help with the tidying around the setting and are given special roles. The 'tidy-up chart' has photos and names of all the children next to a picture of an area in the setting that needs clearing away. Children must identify their photo or name and link it to the job they have been allocated. This gives children a sense of achievement and self worth.

Children enjoy spending time in the role play area that has been set up as a grocery shop. They are provided with many good quality resources that help develop their imagination. For example, they have a range of plastic fruits, baskets, shopping bags, tills with money and laminated shopping lists which the children have made. They negotiate roles as they discuss who will buy

the fruit. There are many opportunities for children to practise mark making and early writing skills, they use crayons, pencils, paint and make patterns in the sand. They are able to recognise letters and words in the environment as they compare what fruit they have in their baskets to the shopping lists and to displays on the wall.

Children are developing their number and problem solving skills as they construct towers with Lego bricks and play mathematical games such as lotto and dominos. Children use mathematical language confidently, for example, when playing with tractors in the sand, one child says, 'my one is bigger than yours'. They have good opportunities to recognise and explore numbers in the environment and enjoy playing with the abacus, weighing scales and floor shapes.

Children are exploring and investigating their environment. They study life cycles of tadpoles and butterflies and have a range of puzzles and books relating to other animals and their habitats. Children are learning about the beliefs and cultures of other people as festivals throughout the year are recognised. At Easter time, the church priest comes in to talk to the children about the meaning of Easter.

Activities such as collage with different materials, cutting and sticking, clay models and painting allow children to be creative and explore textures, colours and shapes. Children enjoy dance and movement on a regular basis allowing them to explore the way their bodies move.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are motivated, confident and have good levels of self esteem. They have lots of fun as they learn about the world they live in, participating in festival celebrations, for example, they make candles for Diwali and decorate them with beads and gems. Children experience quiet times in the book corner with soft cushions.

There is a good range of toys and resources to promote children's understanding of diversity, for example, dressing up clothes, dolls, books, posters and puzzles. They are kind and considerate to one another, as they make room at the sand tray for everyone.

A suitable inclusion policy is in place and several staff have had Special Educational Needs training. One of whom is the nominated Special Education Needs Co-ordinator who is responsible for integrating children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities into the setting. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attending the setting are well supported and cared for. Staff are aware of the importance of communication and have good relationships with children, their parents and professionals. Children with English as an additional language are supported within the setting.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents of children receiving funding are given lengthy information about the Foundation Stage of learning, some of which is not relevant, meaning parents can misunderstand the setting's curriculum and the importance of their children's progress. At the beginning of the first term, a parents' open evening takes place where new parents have the opportunity to talk with staff, meet key workers and to discuss all necessary information. Further parents' evenings take place once a term where they meet with staff to discuss their children's progress and future development. Parents receive report books that include photos, samples of their children's work and observations that have been made during their child's focused activities. However, the observations that have been included

in the report books are not put into context in terms of what areas of learning they link to. Therefore, they can appear irrelevant, as parents may not see a clear link to the area of development or what new skills their child may have grasped.

Newsletters are sent out to all parents detailing nursery events, activities, menus and relevant information about the Foundation Stage and the Birth to three matters. This information can also be found on the parents' notice boards.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. Managers and staff are clear about their role and responsibilities, they work effectively as a team and as a result, the day runs smoothly for the children. Staff have designated roles such as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and behaviour management co-ordinator. Good communication systems are in place such as staff appraisals, and staff and planning meetings. Managers monitor the quality of teaching, identify training needs and track any weaknesses through observing staff and discussions at one to one meetings. Funded children are making good progress in their development.

The premises are well organised and children are happy, secure and confident in their surroundings. Their individual needs are met effectively because staff have a good understanding of child care and development. Staff are keen, motivated and act as good role models for the children. The setting follows rigorous recruitment procedures and documentation is in place to support children's health, safety and well-being. Some of the settings policies and procedures need updating as some information is no longer applicable.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, there were no significant weaknesses to report, but two areas were raised for consideration. The setting put in place an action plan to target the two areas. Improvement has been made in both areas as follows.

The first point was to consider opportunities for children to increase independent access to resources; to allow children spontaneous opportunities to make decisions and choices about what they want to play with. To help children to undertake independent exploration and investigation and to exercise autonomy over their own learning and set themselves challenges.

The setting's main hall has been arranged to offer a free flow of play and learning. Activities are attractively set out to offer children choice and independence. Further supporting their free choice and developing their creative skills, children have access to a large collage trolley where they can choose from a vast range of materials. This encourages children to direct their own learning and create a piece of independent work.

The second point was to consider systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the education programme.

Staff and committee members come together to discuss and formulate a review of what has been done over the past year and to create a plan for the forthcoming year. Staff continue to review throughout the year to identify any areas for improvement

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 hand washing facilities, other than those used in the toilet area, are always clean and suitable for children to use
- ensure all policies are up to date and the complaints policy is in line with current legislation

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):

- ensure parents are given clear and relevant information about the Foundation Stage and their children's progress towards the early learning goals.

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