

St. Lawrence Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY239264

Inspection date 16 October 2007

Inspector Melissa Turner

Setting Address St. Lawrence Village Hall, Church Road, Stone Street, Sevenoaks, Kent,
TN15 0LL

Telephone number 01732 763354

E-mail

Registered person St. Lawrence Preschool

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care 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.

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. Lawrence Pre-school is committee run and opened in 2002. It operates from the small hall within the village hall, in Stone Street, near Sevenoaks, Kent. A maximum of 18 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.15 to 12.00 and on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:00 to 15:00, during term time only. All children share access to the outdoor play area.

There are currently 18 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing a sound awareness of keeping themselves healthy. For example, they cleanse their hands with a wet wipe before eating snack, singing 'wash those dirty hands'. After toileting they wash their hands with antibacterial soap and water and use paper towels for hand drying. This helps to avoid the spread of infection. Children do use a shared bowl of hand water after art activities; however, staff change this regularly to maintain satisfactory standards of hygiene. Staff adopt positive practices to promote good standards; they use antibacterial spray to keep table tops clean and different coloured cloths for different jobs around the pre-school. They also talk with children about good practices, such as why hand washing is important before doing cooking activities and why it's important to cough in to our hands.

Children enjoy a variety of foods at snack time. For example, they help themselves to pieces of apple and a biscuit, which have been brought in to celebrate a child's birthday. They also enjoy other snacks to help promote healthy eating, such as vegetables, dried fruit, yoghurt or toast. Children help themselves as the snacks are passed round, however they do not have anything, such as a plate or napkin, to eat their snack from. They drink milk or water or may bring in a drink of their choice if they wish. A jug of water and cups are set out so that children can help themselves at other times thus helping them to stay hydrated.

Suitable systems are in place to ensure that staff are aware of dietary requirements, and are able to deal with illnesses or accidents. Currently, however, the required permission for emergency treatment is not in place. Although two of the five staff have first aid qualifications, one day a week none are present which means minimum requirements are not being met. However, staff have plans to immediately address this by ensuring one staff member will be available every day to ensure no child is put at risk.

Children thoroughly enjoy a wide variety of physical play opportunities. They delight as they have the opportunity to play outdoors after snack using a wide range of toys and equipment, such as bikes, trucks, building bricks and cars. Children enjoy playing outdoors for an extended period of time. In poor weather the large hall is set up and children benefit from the use of a further range of equipment, such as the climbing frame and slide and bat and ball games. Staff ensure they plan a variety and good range of physical activities for children on a daily basis, encouraging and enabling children to develop an appreciation of physical activity and make good progress in this area of learning.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, child friendly environment which is organised to meet their needs and promote all areas of learning. Currently the home corner requires further development to ensure it is well organised and used, and inviting for children. Children have access to a wide range of good quality resources which are set up so that they can help themselves and make independent choices.

Security is well maintained and visitors are ID checked and sign in on arrival. Staff promote children's safety at all times, regularly completing head counts, and checking the outdoor play area before use. Staff also ensure children are strapped in to any pull along trucks they use

and wear safety helmets when riding bikes. These aspects help to keep children safe. Risk assessments are reported to be completed, although no evidence is currently available on-site. Staff do daily checks to ensure the pre-school is safe and suitable for children's use. Fire drills are practised regularly to help keep children safe in the event of a fire. However, no detailed record is kept to enable staff to review and improve routines.

Staff deploy themselves well and supervise children at all times to promote their safety throughout the session. Clear procedures for outdoor play and local outings ensures children are kept safe when outdoors. The nominated person for child protection and the Deputy have a sound awareness of child protection issues. Training has been completed and is due to be renewed shortly. A policy is in place supporting staff. Consequently children's welfare and well-being is considered a priority and is promoted by staff at all times. These aspects help keep children safe and, as a result, children are beginning to understand safety and why keeping themselves safe is important.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are extremely happy and settled. They arrive with confidence and receive a warm welcome from staff. Children quickly settle in to pre-school routines. Staff are extremely sensitive and caring towards children, helping those that need support when they arrive. Staff react sensitively to any issues that arise. Younger children are supported well and their needs are planned for accordingly. Children are happy and enthusiastic throughout the morning. Staff organise sessions well to ensure children develop close relationships with all staff and their key workers and have the space and time to use all available play opportunities.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff support children at their activities, offering them encouragement, support and challenge appropriate to their level of understanding and ability. They deploy themselves extremely well to support children to make good progress in all their activities. Staff value children's contributions and efforts. Children benefit from staff support as they are encouraged to try activities. They offer children clear demonstrations, explanations and examples when introducing new activities. For example as children prepare the pumpkin to make soup, they are offered the opportunity to scoop out the seeds and flesh with their hands, which prompts discussion about its texture and smell.

A planning system that works well in practice is in place; however, there is room for further detail to be recorded about the aims and objectives of all activities throughout the sessions. Staff create individual play plans for each child based on the observations completed of their individual achievements and needs; these then inform the planning system overall, helping staff to ensure they plan for all children's needs. All staff show good levels of enthusiasm and commitment to helping children achieve and a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. They are skilled at recognising children's individual needs and helping them make progress accordingly. This is supported by the clear identification of children's next steps in their play plans. Consequently, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children make good progress towards all early learning goals. Children contribute with confidence in group situations, sharing their news or toys they have brought in. They are developing friendships with one another and feel secure with the staff. Children develop strong skills in mathematical development as they frequently count throughout their activities, for example

as they go outdoors to play, at circle time and in activities, such as counting the pegs on the peg board. They understand simple challenges when singing rhymes, such as 'Five little men in a flying saucer' and work out how many are left. The permanently set up maths area enables children to use maths resources, such as compare bears, shapes and weights.

Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy. They communicate well at circle time and thoroughly enjoy listening to stories, including the story of 'The Blue Balloon' where they help suggest what will happen next. Children have the opportunity to choose a book daily to take home to read if they wish. Children develop an understanding of letters and their sounds, as they talk about the letter of the week 'g' and what other word starts with the same letter - suggestions include gate, garden and green. They learn new words and their meanings during story time, for example, they discuss what the word 'indestructible' means and learn about the animal 'boa constrictor'. Children have a variety of opportunities to mark make as they use the chalk board, painting and drawing easel set up, as well as the writing table which is organised with a wide range of resources to promote early mark making skills.

Children take part in opportunities for exploration and investigation. They delight as they scoop out the inside of the pumpkin, discussing its properties. Staff talk with children about preparing for making the soup and how the pumpkin links in to their autumn theme. Children also show interest in exploring the natural materials set out on trays, such as feathers, shells, pine cones, corks and pebbles, sometimes using magnifying glasses to take a closer look. Staff encourage discussions about what the children can see, hear and touch. Children have free access to a wide range of construction resources and enjoy constructing with wooden bricks on a play mat outdoors. They show skill as they use the computer and mouse, navigating around programmes with confidence. They learn about wider society through activities, for example, covering Valentines Day, Diwali and Rosh Hashanah. Children show an interest in their local environment, they enjoy walks in the locality and have also enjoyed planting activities outdoors.

Children take part in a wide range of creative activities; they delight as they create potato prints using a range of glittery paint colours, they create paintings with a choice of paint colours and brush sizes as well as sponges and a scouring brush to create different effects. Children enjoy using their imagination as they play with the dolls house and in the home corner. However, this is not widely used, and currently it's organisation limits children full access to enable them to play using it to its full potential. Children enjoy singing and music and join in with a good variety of nursery rhymes. They also benefit from weekly visits from a music teacher.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are skilled in helping children feel valued, supported and well cared for, encouraging them to feel settled and valued at pre-school. They are knowledgeable about children's individual needs and meet these well. They welcome children as they arrive and offer them close comfort and reassurance helping them to settle quickly and feel part of pre-school. Children benefit from staff talking to them about their families and celebrating special events, such as their birthdays. Children develop an awareness of our wider society through planned activities. They play with resources promoting diversity, such as books, dolls and play people. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. A nominated Special Educational Needs Coordinator is in place, which helps ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported and have their needs met.

Children's behaviour is very good. Staff act as extremely positive role models, praising children for their achievements, efforts and contributions. Children become actively involved in learning to share and take turns; they understand they need to use the sand timer at the computer to work out whose turn it is next. Children willingly take turns to use the push along trolley and are kind and readily willing to share and help one another. Consequently, children are happy and settled and able to feel secure, and they understand the behaviour rules of the setting.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are involved with the pre-school and operate a supportive parents committee, and are invited to help out if they wish. All parents are welcomed and the forthcoming 'Dad's week' encourages fathers to feel involved. Staff work closely with parents regarding their children's care and education and have fostered good working relationships. Staff liaise with parents about their children's progress regularly and provide feedback at the annual parents open evening. They are also welcome to review their children's observation books at any time, and their children's play plans are sent out once a term, which parents are invited to record any comments on if they wish. Parents are invited to give feedback via parent's questionnaires. Staff provide a good range of information for parents, including a notice board with the planning displayed, regular newsletters and parent's prospectus. Systems to work with parents are effective and help to keep them informed about their children's care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Organisation of the pre-school is satisfactory. Paperwork is suitably organised in most areas, however, some are lacking or require updating, for example, thorough policies for the recruitment, vetting and induction of all staff, evaluation records of fire drills and permission for emergency treatment for all children. Systems are in place for the recruitment of new staff, but paperwork around this aspect requires expansion. Four staff hold relevant qualifications and all staff are police checked. Good ratios are maintained and staff deploy themselves well, supporting children effectively. This enables them to offer a well run session, contributing to good learning opportunities for all children and helps ensure children are kept safe and well cared for. The committee have failed to notify Ofsted of their recent changes in members; this is a notifiable event and means a legal requirement has not been met.

Leadership and management are good. Staff are positive in their roles and work well together and are supported by an enthusiastic supervisor and parent committee. Staff contribute to the planning for funded children and clearly evaluate this regularly to make changes or improvements. A clear staff training plan is kept and updated regularly and staff training and development needs are informally discussed on a regular basis. Written evidence of this, such as completed appraisal information, is not currently recorded. Staff have plans to implement systems shortly. Staff are enthusiastic, committed and settled in their jobs. Staff aim to make changes and progress at the pre-school and regularly hold staff and committee meetings. Staff have worked on development and improvements and a detailed self evaluation file documents these. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection in October 2004, staff were set recommendations relating to care and education. Staff have now taken steps to ensure that balancing equipment is safe; ropes used have been shortened to minimise risks to children. A good range of multicultural resources have been purchased to help children develop an understanding in this aspect. These are

accessible to children throughout the pre-school and include dolls, dressing up clothes and books. A lost child and uncollected child policy has now been drawn up and implemented.

Children now have more opportunities to consolidate maths skills during outdoor play. They count one another as they leave to go outdoors and as they line up to go indoors. Activities to encourage counting and maths skills outdoors are provided, such as numbering the helmets and cones and providing children with a hop scotch mat. Children have plenty of opportunities to develop maths skills and solve problems, for example, number rhymes that encourage them to work out how many are left (for example, the currant bun song), and counting and challenges throughout a variety of activities. For example, children count how many pumpkin seeds they have removed. A wide range of maths resources are also available to the children daily. Children explore their local environment regularly. They take part in sponsored walks, local walks in the countryside, trips to the local school and regular outdoor play opportunities. Staff have developed outdoor play opportunities so that they challenge more able children; equipment has been purchased that can be designed and set up for children of all abilities. Children can also get involved in helping to set this up. Staff also organise physical activities so that there is a wide variety available to children at each session.

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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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 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 children have suitable plates or bowls to eat their snack from
- ensure a first aid qualified member of staff is present every day
- ensure Ofsted are notified of all changes of committee as soon as possible
- ensure all required paperwork is up to date and in line with the relevant National Standards

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):

- further develop the organisation of the home corner to create a more inviting and user friendly area
- develop plans to include more information about aims and objectives of activities provided for children on a daily basis

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