

St John's Pre School Merrow

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY246627
Inspection date	04 October 2007
Inspector	Amanda May
Setting Address	222 Epsom Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 7AA
Telephone number	01483 454625
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Registered person	St John's Pre School Merrow
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. John's pre-school is a committee-run group which was re-registered in 2003. The pre-school meet in a church hall in the Guildford suburb of Merrow. It shares the hall with a number of other organisations so all equipment must be cleared away daily. The children have use of one large hall with toilet facilities and a small enclosed paved area for outside play. The nursery serves children from the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 31 children on roll. This includes 18 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 to 12:30 on Mondays to Fridays.

Eight members of staff are employed to work with the children. Four members of staff have early years qualifications, one of whom holds a teaching certificate. Three members of staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from the Early Years Childcare Service.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children who attend the setting learn how to keep themselves healthy through daily routines. Children know to wash their hands before snack and access the toilets independently when required. Staff support children effectively through providing pump-action soap, steps up to the sink and easy to reach paper towels. Children are encouraged to blow their own noses when they need to and children beam as they remember to wipe their feet as they come inside from outdoor play.

Children enjoy their independence and taking responsibility for themselves as they confidently wash up their own cups after having drinks at the snack bar. Children bring in healthy snacks from home to enjoy with their friends. They choose when they would like to stop their activities for a drink and some fruit, before collecting their cups and pouring their own drinks of milk or water. Children who have special dietary requirements or preferences are asked to bring in any specialist drinks in a labelled container from home. This ensures children's health is protected at all times.

Nappy changing facilities are in place for children who are not yet potty-trained, and staff ensure the risk of illness and infection is minimised as they wear gloves and wipe down the changing area after each use with an anti-bacterial spray. Accidents are dealt with effectively at the setting, and documentation is detailed and shared with parents who sign to acknowledge any injury. Children are further protected as parents are given an accompanying notice for children who have bumped their heads. This ensures vital information is shared with parents and children's well-being is met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment and are protected through good procedures. Staff risk assess the setting each morning and record their checks each day. The outside area is thoroughly assessed to ensure there are no hazards evident, before children come out to enjoy the fresh air. The setting is warm and welcoming and staff are vigilant as they supervise children, reminding them of the house rules such as using kind hands and feet. Visual notices and pictures are also used for children to see how many children are allowed to play on the climbing frame at one time. This allows children to gain a better understanding of safety rules, whilst being independent. Staff ensure children are kept secure as alarm sensors are used around fire exits to ensure children do not leave the premises unsupervised. Staff are well-aware of potential risks within the setting, and minimise these effectively through good staff deployment.

Children are protected through the staff having a clear understanding of issues surrounding safeguarding children. The supervisor is the setting's child protection co-ordinator and has attended a variety of courses in this area, in order to ensure her knowledge is current. A high majority of staff have also attended training and have a good understanding of the procedures they should follow if there were concerns about a child's welfare. Relevant and useful documentation is in place for staff to refer to if necessary, and staff are encouraged to read this in detail by borrowing the copy from the setting or ensuring they have their own copy.

This ensures their knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities are clear and children are protected accordingly.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children experience a varied and stimulating range of activities which contribute well to their development inside and outside the provision. Children enjoy growing beans and sunflowers at an annual fund-raising event. They enjoy being independent in their play, as they choose, from a selection of well-displayed resources, what they would like to do next. Children concentrate as they fit together pieces of track with a member of staff and when looking at books with their friends. The setting finds out about children's likes and dislikes before they start and ensures that their needs and personalities are supported effectively. Staff take time to listen closely to what each child has to say, and value their input accordingly. Relationships within the setting are close. Firm friendships are in place amongst the children as they congratulate each other when they finish a puzzle, by giving each other a big hug. Staff are equally popular as children seek them out to show them how well they play their musical instruments. Staff are enthusiastic during the session and children grasp this enthusiasm equally as they discover new things and achieve very well in all they do.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are eager to learn new things and staff support children effectively in many of their activities. Key-worker groups are used within the setting and children are observed in their activities to record their abilities and struggles. The provision has improved the way it tracks children's progress and key-workers have a clear understanding of the learning needs of each of the children whom they support. However, currently this information is not shared effectively with other members of staff and children could be better supported by linking their individual next steps of learning, into future planning to ensure all children are challenged and stimulated effectively.

Planning is done by all members of staff, ensuring that new ideas are encouraged to keep children stimulated and intrigued. The deputy supervisor ensures adult-led plans are linked to stepping stones and early learning goals in respect of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. However, the learning objectives for each activity are not clear from daily plans. As a result, children are not always supported in their learning in child-led play. Adult-led activities are well-designed and staff are well supported in ensuring the learning objectives are clear. Children enjoy their learning and as staff evaluate adult-led activities well, children are continuously eager to revisit them.

Children concentrate and persist well as they access a wide variety of physical and creative play. A wide range of facilities is in place to encourage children to practise how they move through tunnels and balance on beams, before children independently access the outside area where they pedal their bikes, and push themselves along skilfully on their scooters. Children enjoy parachute games, and gain a good understanding of their bodies as they jump up and down to warm themselves up. Children develop their understanding of some mathematical concepts as they fill plastic bottles with coloured rice. Children use small scoops or their fingers to fill the bottles, and are encouraged to think about whether they are full up or not. Children gain a clear awareness of these meanings, whilst concentrating hard on their goal.

Children enjoy making use of the mark-making table where they develop their skills in using a variety of media to draw and mark-make. Children are encouraged within their imaginary play to use diaries and label folders in the role-play office, or write shopping lists when the area evolves into a shop. Children become aware of their own names as they register themselves at the start of each day. They hang up their coats, then find their names, before posting them in the box and exploring the activities on offer. This encourages children's development of communication, language and literacy, whilst children become independent and responsible in their own learning and development.

The setting provides children with a wide variety of equipment and resources which encourage children to increase their understanding of modern technology. Children skilfully explore computer programs using a large mouse and touch screen technology. Children also benefit from having child-friendly cameras which they take on trips to the local allotments, taking pictures of the plants growing and any insects they can spot. Children enjoy looking at their pictures and look forward to using their very own camcorder to take video pictures of their friends. Children gain a further understanding of the world as they help care for the pre-school's stick insects. Children hold them carefully and peer into the tank to try and spot them on the leaves. This encourages their enthusiasm for learning about living creatures, whilst developing their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and at home in the comfortable environment. They confidently make choices and take decisions as they initiate and extend their own play and learning. Behaviour at the setting is good. Children are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities, and do so with enthusiasm. Staff support children well, and so children remain stimulated and focused on their play. Lots of positive praise and encouragement is used by all staff, and children show pride in their achievements. Secure procedures are in place for staff to deal quickly and effectively with inappropriate behaviour. Staff speak to children about how their actions may have made their friends feel, and encourage them to say sorry. Children generally show kindness and compassion for their friends, and give them hugs and smiles during their play.

The staff are well-equipped to support children who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Children are observed to find out about their needs and abilities, and staff know to share information with parents and provide suitable activities for children depending on their age and stage of development. Good links are in place for the setting's special needs co-ordinator to gain support if she should need it from outside agencies. This ensures each child's individual needs are consistently supported, and children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Children become aware of the wider society as they celebrate festivals from other cultures such as Ede and Diwali. Children enjoy dressing up in traditional costumes, as well as the staff who wear Saris. Children taste samosas and onion bhajis whilst gaining an insight into other people's beliefs and cultures. Children enjoy celebrating Chinese New Year with their friends. They all make a large dragon which they make move across the room, before tasting noodles and rice. A good range of resources are in place to highlight cultural differences, and children benefit from books, puzzles and figures which represent people from around the world. Three children currently attend the setting who have English as an additional language. Staff support these children through requesting key phrases from home to aid communication, however further resources would be beneficial in ensuring all children feel welcomed, valued and supported.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are encouraged to learn about the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, as information is published in the setting's prospectus and on the website. Parents are advised of the different areas of learning, and are given examples of how children cover these areas through their day to day activities. However, planning is not always displayed on the notice board for parents to see, and it is unclear what the learning objectives are for all of the activities on offer. Parents benefit from parent conferences, which allow key-workers to meet parents and discuss their children's work and educational progress. A parent rota is also to be introduced, to encourage parents to share their skills with the children, through reading books, or talking about their occupation. Staff are keen to have parents involved in the running of the provision, and encourage them to think about joining the committee so they can be directly involved in its management.

Parents are encouraged to share information with members of staff, about any events which may be useful for discussion at circle time. Staff are aware of what children enjoy playing with, and about who makes up their families when they first join the setting, to ensure children feel welcomed and secure. However children's educational starting points are not actively sought from parents. As a result, children may not be being challenged effectively and stimulated according to their own developmental and educational needs. Staff are available for parents to talk to, and are greeted by the supervisor each morning and at the end of the session. This provides parents with the opportunity to share any information or seek feedback about their children's day. The setting encourages parents to share information and this ensures consistency of care and support from home to the setting.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children have fun and enjoy their time as a result of good organisation. The setting operates from a large hall, which is split into different areas of learning for children to enjoy. The arrangement of screens and equipment is done in order to ensure children remain focused and allow them time to concentrate fully on the activity which they have chosen. Although there are minimal storage facilities for the pre-school, staff aim to provide them with interesting activities and stimulating experiences to aid their care, learning and play. Staff deploy themselves effectively, and base themselves where most useful to support children. Robust recruitment procedures are in place, and references and full employment history of each member of staff are kept by the committee. Criminal records checks are completed and renewed every three years, however the manager does not currently have day to day access to these, which could compromise children's safety.

Staff work very well together as a team and share the setting's vision for providing high quality care for the children who attend. Each member of staff has an annual appraisal where their work is reviewed, and training issues are addressed. Staff are encouraged to access training which is relevant and useful for the pre-school, as they enjoy sharing ideas and good practice with other providers in the area. The key-worker system at the setting operates well, and files are kept for each child. These include developmental records and examples of each child's work. However some children have not yet been allocated a file to track their achievements. All relevant documentation is in place, with secure policies and procedures being available for parents to view at any time. Any documents containing personal information are stored in a locked cupboard. This ensures confidentiality is maintained at all times. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff gather together every week to discuss planning and to evaluate adult-led activities. Staff are well-supported and led by the deputy supervisor who holds an early years teaching qualification. Management of the curriculum is done well, although could be improved further through implementing strategies for ensuring children's needs are linked with future planning, and displaying clear learning objectives for each activity on daily planning sheets. Systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and to support staff in areas of development. Staff are praised effectively in their teaching where relevant, whilst they are encouraged to ask for guidance from colleagues if required.

The supervisor ensures files and written records of each child's achievements are updated and detailed as she checks key-worker files and observation books regularly. As the supervisor and deputy are very involved in the day to day running of the setting, whilst caring for the children, observations of staff practice are done regularly. This ensures children are cared for consistently to a high standard, and are challenged effectively in most aspects of their learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was recommended to increase resources that reflect cultural diversity and to better organise space to ensure children are focused on their activities. The setting has now widened its resources to ensure a good selection of equipment is in place which celebrates difference. Children enjoy celebrating festivals from around the world, whilst learning about different people's beliefs and cultures. Space is very well organised. Small partition boards are now used to define each learning area. This ensures children can concentrate on their chosen activity well.

In respect of nursery education, the provider was recommended to develop planning to ensure observations are made and used to encourage children in their next steps of learning, to encourage children to be aware of others needs, and to provide children opportunities to enjoy well-planned activities to work creatively with musical instruments to develop their understanding of rhythm and making sound. Children enjoy learning about rhythm as they sing the music man song, and play their instruments slowly, quickly, loudly and quietly. Children enjoy exploring a range of instruments, heightening their interest. Staff encourage children to help one another, and when splitting children into groups for activities, they ensure there is a good mix of ages in order for children to learn from their peers.

The setting has made good progress in observing children, and finding out what their individual needs are in respect of the early learning goals, however this should be further developed to ensure these needs are known by all members of staff, and linked to future plans.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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 nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- develop resources to support children who attend the setting who have English as an additional language, to ensure they feel welcomed and secure
- ensure CRB reference numbers and dates are held by the supervisor for her reference at all times.

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 key-worker files are in place for all children and seek information from new parents to find out what children's starting points are
- develop methods to ensure children are supported individually in their next steps of learning, through sharing information between staff and making links to future planning
- ensure daily planning includes clear, written learning objectives which are shared with parents.

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