

St Oswald's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315247
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Inspector	Janice Linsdell
Setting Address	St Oswald's Primary School, Padgate Lane, Padgate, Warrington, Cheshire, WA1 3LB
Telephone number	01925 825425
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Registered person	The Trustess of St Oswalds Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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 Oswald's Pre-School opened in 1991. It is run by a committee and operates from a self-contained classroom adjoining St Oswald's Primary School in Padgate, Warrington. The pre-school is open each week day from 08.00 to 08.55 for breakfast, and from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00, term time only. A maximum of 19 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 37 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 27 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five members of staff including the manager. Of these, three hold appropriate qualifications in early years. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted as staff consistently implement hygienic procedures to keep all areas clean and free from germs. They regularly wash their hands and wear aprons for preparing and serving food. Children learn to develop an understanding of good hygiene practices, for example, as staff explain why tissues need to be placed in the bin after use, and why children need to use soap when they wash their hands. Some staff are trained in first aid and basic food hygiene, which further benefits children's health.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They enjoy exploring in the outdoor play area, where they can climb small trees and balance on logs. They also have use of wheeled toys and various outdoor equipment to develop their coordination skills. Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruits, carrot and yoghurt. They have a choice of milk or water to drink with their snack, but they do not have independent access to fresh drinking water throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is generally safe and secure. The premises are small so children can be closely supervised, which minimises the risk of accidents. Children are able to move around freely as they take part in the variety of activities on offer. Good quality play materials are readily accessible to children, which are clean, well maintained and stored safely in low-level storage units. Most aspects relating to children's safety are satisfactory, but fire drills are not carried out frequently and risk assessments are not kept up to date.

Children are developing some understanding of the need to keep themselves safe as staff offer gentle reminders about safety rules, such as no running indoors and no throwing of the toys in case they hurt others. Children's welfare is sufficiently safeguarded because staff understand their role in keeping children safe from harm. Relevant child protection procedures and information are available to assist staff in taking appropriate action to protect children, but none of the staff have attended 'safeguarding' training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff establish positive relationships with the children and have fun with them. They make sure children feel welcome, safe and well cared for. As a result, children are happy, settled and confident to take part in the variety of activities on offer. Children show interest in the environment and staff encourage them to make lots of choices in their play.

Children enthusiastically participate in singing songs, as they join in with the actions and laugh and sway to the music. They very much enjoy playing in the home corner, where they pretend to make dinner or peg out the clothes on the washing line. They are confident to initiate their own play, for example, as one child invites his friend to play with him in the sand. Children express themselves as they paint their own pictures. They have pleasant conversations with staff as they make their own Christmas cards and enjoy playing imaginatively with the garage.

All children really enjoy outside play and have fun in the fresh air, as they climb on the logs or run through the leaves on the ground.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are making steady progress across the six areas of learning. They are beginning to develop social relationships with their peers and develop some independence as they put on their own coats, although this is not fully promoted at snack time. Children learn to communicate as they chat to adults about what they are doing and have interesting conversations, for example, about when they visited Father Christmas. They listen reasonably well at circle time and show interest in the book area as they select books and pretend to read to their friend. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of mathematics. They competently count the number of children present at registration and count how many children are left when others have gone to the bathroom. They use positional language as they line up 'behind' one another and learn about shape as they sort and match with puzzles.

The outdoor play area provides some good opportunities for children to explore and investigate, and children show much interest when they discover a tiny pinecone hidden amongst the leaves. Children are proud to show their own models they have built using various construction materials. They have access to a computer to promote their understanding of technology, although this is not always used during the session. Children's physical development is developing sufficiently well. They practise their fine motor skills as they use the small tools with the play dough, or carefully fasten buttons on the doll's clothes. There are several examples of children's artwork displayed around the nursery which show that children use a range of media to develop their creativity. They use their imagination well as they play with small world toys, use the dressing up clothes and access the role play area.

Most of the staff have attended a good level of training to assist them in delivering Foundation Stage curriculum. They organise the environment sufficiently well so that children have opportunities to play and learn in different areas. However, some craft activities are over-directed by adults and the increase in noise levels can sometimes impact on children's ability to concentrate. Planning for children's learning is detailed, and linked to the stepping stones and monthly themes. Staff take an informal approach to carrying out observations of the children and evaluating activities. This means relevant information is not consistently recorded and used effectively to plan for children's next steps in their learning. All children have individual scrap books, which show some examples of their work. Assessment records are available, but they are not used appropriately to track the progress of individual children and identify any gaps in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff know the children's individual needs and abilities well, which means children are well supported. They help children to develop an awareness of diversity through planned activities and cultural celebrations, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. Some staff have attended training in relation to supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Positive behaviour is well promoted and children are very familiar with how they are expected to behave. For example, they know that 'kind hands don't push' and remember they need to

have 'good listening ears'. Children enjoy the responsibilities of being the 'helper for the day' as they help with small tasks, such as handing out plates at snack time or leading the prayer at home time. Staff acknowledge children's efforts and offer plenty of praise and encouragement, which promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive a copy of the pre-school prospectus, which provides a good level of information about the operation of the pre-school and its educational programme. Newsletters are issued each term to provide parents with information about themes and planned activities. Staff encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning at home, for example, providing the words to new songs. Parents share very positive comments about the pre-school, particularly about the staff and the personal care they offer the children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Most of the staff are qualified and well experienced, having worked together in the pre-school for several years. They attend a wide range of additional training to further develop their skills and knowledge. The session is well organised so that children have good opportunities to play, learn and develop. All staff caring for children have completed appropriate vetting to ensure their suitability. A new committee has very recently been appointed, which means some members have yet to complete necessary checks.

All documentation to promote children's care and welfare is accessible, well organised and well maintained. There are effective policies and procedures in place to support good childcare practice, which are regularly reviewed and updated. In the main, these are well implemented by staff, with the exception of carrying out fire drills and risk assessments.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The manager works closely with the staff team to offer children a broad and balanced curriculum. She encourages their professional development by providing good opportunities for ongoing training. The procedures to monitor the delivery of the educational programme are somewhat informal, which means there are inconsistencies in some of the systems to promote children's learning and assess their progress. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the pre-school has updated all policies and procedures, and plans to continue to review these on an annual basis. Children's large physical skills are more challenged in the outside play area, where they have many opportunities to climb, jump and run. The pre-school has increased the range of large construction materials so children can participate in building bigger models.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 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):

- improve children's safety on the premises by making sure fire drills are carried out more frequently and ensuring risk assessments are kept up to date
- make sure all new committee members complete appropriate vetting to ensure their suitability.

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):

- improve the arrangements for observing children and assessing their individual progress through the stepping stones
- evaluate activities more effectively to assist in planning for children's next steps in their learning
- make sure craft activities are not over-directed by adults, and monitor noise levels to assist children's levels of concentration.

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