

# St Francis Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY301961
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Carole Gronow
<b>Setting Address</b>	Blackfield Primary School, Hampton Lane, Blackfield, Southampton, Hampshire, SO45 1XA
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 899 406
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	St Francis Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Francis Preschool has been running from Blackfield Primary School since 2006. The preschool has sole use of one classroom which is totally self-contained and has its own garden and outside play area. The preschool is a community group managed by a voluntary committee of parents. Children attend from a wide area.

The setting is registered to accept up to 26 children aged from two to under five years. There are currently 83 children on roll, including 56 who are in receipt of nursery funding. The preschool supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and welcomes those with English as an additional language.

The preschool opens five days a week in term time. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:30 Monday to Friday and from 12:15 to 14:45 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday. In the summer term afternoon sessions also run on Wednesday and Friday. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are nine members of staff working with the children, including five with early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The comprehensive policies and procedures that are in place ensure that children are fully protected from any risk of illness due to cross-infection. Premises are maintained to a high level of cleanliness for example, the toilet area is regularly checked and cleaned. Children are encouraged to develop good personal care. They take themselves to the toilet, and then wash their hands without being reminded using both soap and paper towels. When they decide to have their snacks they again wash their hands on their own accord before they go to the snack table. There is a high number a staff with a suitable first aid qualification, an easily accessible first aid kit and the required signed parental consents are all in place. This means that children receive the most appropriate treatment if they become ill or are hurt. All the necessary records such as if a child has an accident or is administered medication are promptly completed and parents and carers are advised at collection so that they are fully aware of any attention their child has received.

At snack time, staff's good awareness of children's specific dietary requirements ensures that these are fully taken into account. The setting has declared itself a 'nut free zone' so that children are not subjected to the risk of coming into contact with even the slightest trace of nuts. Children are offered drinks of either milk or water which they confidently and ably pour for themselves. They are provided with healthy and nutritious snacks which consist of a variety of chopped up fresh fruits as well as wholemeal bread and butter. Children get fresh air and physical exercise all year round. They have direct access to their own outside garden area which is partly under cover and is available to them throughout most of each session. Children enjoy playing hopscotch and balancing on beams, they use the trampoline and climbing frame. Activities such as these enable them to develop their levels of fitness, help improve their co-ordination and develop their large muscles.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in premises that are welcoming and highly suitable for the purpose. They have access to a good range of well maintained furniture and equipment and the preschool rotates all its toys, which are all age appropriate and in good condition. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through staff's awareness of child protection issues and procedures. There is a detailed policy in place which is regularly reviewed to ensure that it kept up to date. The policy is displayed on the notice board for all to see and when their child starts at the preschool parents and carers are informed in writing of the preschool's responsibility to protect children.

Children's safety is given a high priority at all times; this is underpinned by a range of relevant policies and procedures. Staff are especially vigilant when children are both arriving and leaving the premises so that there is no possibility that children are able to leave them unaccompanied. An exceptionally comprehensive system protects children from any risk whatsoever of being handed over to the wrong person at home time. This system includes a preschool initiated password that the person must know and the preschool also holds on file the signatures of all possible collectors.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

All children arrive at the preschool eager to enter and happily separate from their parent or carer. They confidently find their names and self-register. Children experience a range of different play opportunities and participate in activities suitable to their age group and which, over a period of time cover the full range of play provision that the preschool has to offer.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

All staff undertake observations on the children and individual records of achievements are regularly completed by their key person. However there is no system in place to ensure that activities are planned to fill in any gaps in the stepping stones that become evident through this. Well planned focus activities cover a different area of learning each session but these are randomly selected by staff. They are not planned to systematically cover all the aspects of the early learning goals thus ensuring children can make as much progress as possible. Children make their own choices about what to do throughout the session. However some activities have insufficient resources to sustain children's interest, develop their imagination and creativity and do not provide sufficient challenge, for instance the sizes of the jigsaw puzzles put out. Staff effectively deploy themselves in order to ensure that ratios are correct when children are both in doors and out. They also self deploy themselves so that they are fully engaged with children at some of the different activities that are on offer but are not always aware of other children near by who are wandering around and are not involved in anything.

Staff know the children well, they are interested in their home lives and what they like and children confidently talk to them and ask for help even though sometimes staff do not hear this. Children make free choices about the activities they want to play with and some persist for long periods of time with their chosen task for example, when doing puzzles and writing at the mark making table. Children have exceptionally good personal independence. For instance when going to the toilet and when they want to play in the tent they take their shoes off and put them back on afterwards. Children select resources to play with and when they want to paint, play with the water or help with the collage activity they put an apron on.

Children enjoy looking at books in the attractive and comfortable book area. They choose books to look at, know how to handle them and understand that print carries meaning. They access a permanently set up mark making area where they use a range of different tools and equipment. They engage in many activities that develop hand to eye coordination, for example, they pour their own drinks, use scissors, hold pencils and other writing and drawing implements such as chalks and paint brushes. They use sticky tape from a dispenser, glue sticks and a hole punch. Children ascribe meaning to marks and some can write clearly recognisable letters that are correctly formed and are able to write their names. Children have very limited opportunities to become familiar with information and communication technology and although the preschool has two computers permanently set up in the room the times that children have access to these is minimal.

Children do not have many chances to count during the preschool session, despite this some of them can confidently count to five and beyond and can recognise and name numerals at random. Children regularly use positional language in their daily play for example they discuss which fish is bigger in their collage, which piece of play dough is the heaviest and that the

animals are in the farm house. Children enjoy exploring and investigating and using their different senses. They search for spiders outside and study them in the bug box finding out that when they look through the top the spider looks much bigger. They watch the bees on the flowers with a member of staff who tells them that the bee is gathering nectar and will make it into honey. They explore textures playing with things such as dough, cooked spaghetti, couscous and mash potato and they smell herbs. They plant flowers in the garden, tend them and watch them grow.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

All children feel valued and respected as their individual needs are promoted through good links with parents and carers. Information is gathered on the initial registration form and anything specific is then discussed in more details so that the preschool is aware of what is required to provide the best possible care for each individual child. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support. There is a Special Educational Needs Coordinator in place who has attended relevant training and continues to update her knowledge. She liaises very closely with parents and carers and other preschool staff in order to meet children's needs.

Children's good behaviour is encouraged through the positive role modelling of staff. Children learn about right and wrong because staff discuss unwanted behaviour and explain the consequences. Children take great delight in being given stickers for positive deeds. Some rules are on display reminding children about walking in preschool, looking after toys and being kind to each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers are advised of the setting's policies in the prospectus and some are shared with them when a child is admitted to the group. Parents and carers all feel very welcome in the preschool and are confident in approaching any member of staff if they wish to discuss anything. Partnership with parents and carers of children who receive funding for nursery education is good. Parents and carers are kept well informed about the topics that children look at. This information is sent out half-termly along with details of the rhymes and songs children will be singing and the relevant stories. Suggestions are also included about relevant things that parents and carers can talk about or explore with their children. Children's folders, which are maintained by their key person are sent home at the end of every term. These contain dated samples of their work as well as their record of achievement to show how children are making progress through the stepping stones. There is also a sheet for parents and carers to add their comments. Termly meetings are held when parents and carers are invited to meet with the manager to discuss their child's progress and development.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The preschool meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. Children are well settled and space is organised so that they can move around freely and safely. They easily access all the activities that are available, making independent choices about what to play with. They are cared for by staff who are appropriately checked and qualified. A rigorous vetting procedure as well as a probationary period for new staff ensures that they are suitable to work with young children. All the essential records are kept on children and are regularly updated and shared with parents and carers. The record of children's attendance is completed at the

start of each session and promptly updated if a child arrives late or leaves early; however the one showing staff attendances is not always completed so promptly.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. All staff and management are keen to continue improving the quality of the care and education that they provide. To support them all the necessary policies and procedures are in place and these are regularly reviewed on a rolling programme. However, the complaints one does not fully reflect the most recent guidance and staff are not clear about which specific complaints must be recorded. Regular staff meetings are held and staff receive regular appraisals to discuss their development. There is a comprehensive induction procedure in place for new staff. However, no observations are undertaken in order to assess and evaluate what is happening with in the group in order to ensure that all children are engaged in purposeful activities at all times. Both the manager and many of the staff regularly attend committee meetings.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection under care, the preschool was asked to review the organisation of sessions to minimise the time children spend waiting and ensure that they are able to concentrate without distraction. This was referring to previous premises and since then the setting has reviewed practise to minimise the times that children have to wait. Now a cafeteria style system is used for snack time and the toilets are within the room so children access both these things when they choose to and wash hands accordingly. They were also asked to produce written procedures to be followed should a child fail to be collected and this is now in place.

With regards to the Nursery Education the preschool was asked to increase the staff's knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals so that they can make good use of the activities provided to promote children's individual learning. All staff are now familiar with the early learning goals and have their own documentation to refer to. They are involved in planning a sessional focus activity covering a stepping stone, however do not measure its impact on children's learning as they do not routinely record what children achieve. The preschool was also asked to provide children with more opportunities to use counting and number throughout their daily routines. Children are, occasionally invited to count but this is still not routinely done and many suitable occasions are not utilised, such as at snack time.

### **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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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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):

- improve knowledge and understanding around the specific circumstances under which a complaint must be recorded and investigated and ensure that the complaints policy complies with current guidance
- ensure that the system for registering staff attendance on a daily basis is accurately maintained to clearly show hours of attendance.

### **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):

- effectively use observations to inform planning in order to provide all children with sufficient challenges to ensure progression
- introduce a system to effectively monitor and evaluate the setting to include staff, use of resources and children's play.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)