

St Mary's Church Hall Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY363994
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Inspector	Lisa Jane Cupples
Setting Address	St Mary's Church Hall, Church Road, Warsash, Southampton, SO31 9GF
Telephone number	01489 582313
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Registered person	Little Strawberries Ltd
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 Mary's Church Hall Pre-School opened in 1972. It re-registered in 2007 under a new management structure. It operates from the church hall, located in the grounds of St Mary's Church in the Warsash area of Hampshire. The pre-school serves the local community. A maximum of 26 children may attend each session. The pre-school opens four days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and afternoon sessions are on Mondays from 12:30 until 15:00 and Wednesday from 13:15 until 15:45. Children attend for a variety of sessions and have access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 42 children are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs 10 members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through discussion and daily routines. For example, children are actively encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times. They use soap and dry their hands with disposable paper towels, helping to prevent the possible spread of infection. Staff talk to the children about the importance of washing away the germs, helping them to understand. Children benefit from a healthy and nutritious diet at snack times. Staff provide a wide range of healthy choices and talk to the children about the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables. Staff find out about the children's individual needs through discussion with the parents before the children attend. A detailed record is maintained about the children's allergies, medical and cultural needs, ensuring their individual needs are being met.

Accidents are recorded clearly and staff ensure parents sign to acknowledge the entries. Parents give written consent prior to staff administering any form of medication, the dosage given is recorded and witnessed and parents sign to show they have been informed at the end of the day. Children will receive appropriate treatment if an accident occurs on the premises because five members of staff hold current first aid certificates and the owners ensure at least one is on duty during every session.

Children have ample opportunities to develop their large muscle skills. They use the slide in the outside play area with ease and learn to travel over, under and through obstacles with control. Children's hand to eye co-ordination is developing well, as they make necklaces with threading and play ball games outside. They show good spatial awareness as they find their own space during whole group activities, carefully moving around to ensure they have enough room and others can join in. Children learn to balance as they walk on low balancing beams inside the hall and ride wheeled toys outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to play indoors and outside throughout the session. The doors to the garden area are open and the children wander in and out taking part in the many activities available. This increases their independence and enables them to take part in new play experiences in the outside environment, while being well supervised at all times. The hall is bright and airy and staff use partitions to display the children's work, valuing their achievements. Children have access to an extensive range of resources and play materials that are suitable for their age and stage of development and learning. The equipment and resources are clean and well-maintained in a good condition. Staff arrive early to set up the activities in ways to attract the children. For example, the low balancing beams form the shape of a boat and an oar is provided to spark the children's imagination.

Children learn about keeping themselves safe through daily routines and group rules. For example, children know they have to wear sun hats when they play outside to protect them from the sun. They know they must not run in the hall and are able to explain the fire drills, ensuring they know what to do in an emergency. Children benefit from a safe and secure environment because the staff are vigilant and oversee the play areas at all times. For example, all plug sockets are covered, spillages are cleaned up immediately with little fuss and the doors

to the building are locked, preventing any unauthorised people from gaining access to the hall and the children.

Staff have a very clear understanding of the child protection procedures and are able to recognise the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff would contact the relevant agencies to safeguard the children in their care. All pre-existing injuries and incidents are recorded and the policies include procedures to follow if an allegation is made against a member of staff. All staff undergo vetting procedures when they are appointed, although their ongoing suitability is not monitored at this time to further safeguard the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle quickly on arrival. They come into the pre-school with confidence and chat to the staff about what they have been doing. Younger children are beginning to develop good relationships with staff and are starting to separate from their parents and carers with more confidence. Children laugh and giggle as they look around the room to see what activities are out for the session. They are able to choose what they want to do and move around the hall with ease, as they select resources and activities. Children have access to an extensive range of resources and activities. They are able to play and learn independently, or in small or large groups, helping to develop their social skills and build their self-confidence effectively.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Staff have an exceptionally good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Staff spend time during the sessions observing the children's achievements and identifying the children's next steps. The information gathered is then used to inform the short term curriculum planning, ensuring the children's individual needs are being met at the right time for them. Staff are skilled at differentiating the activities to ensure all children are sufficiently challenged during their time at the setting. For example, a wide range of puzzles are set up and staff support and assist the children when necessary, and offer advice about how the pieces might fit together for the older, more able children. When children manage to complete the puzzles unaided they show a real sense of achievement, often going to tell other children or staff what they have done.

Staff interact well with the children and make the most of incidental learning opportunities throughout the session. For example, children talk about the patterns on the plastic frogs and the activity develops into finding other patterns, consolidating the children's learning. Staff are skilled at asking open-ended questions and encourage the children to think about what they are trying to achieve. Children also have many opportunities to examine and experiment with the resources and materials they use on a daily basis, such as, glue, paint, play dough, sand and water.

Children's personal, social and emotional skills are developing well. They understand the rules of the group and explain the routines to visitors and other children. They share their thoughts with each other during circle time, telling each other their news, although they often talk over each other and interrupt when adults and other children are speaking. Children have the opportunity to take part in small and large group activities, such as registration time and story time. However, many children do not listen and this results in the activity being disrupted,

hindering their learning and that of others because they miss what is happening. Children have access to writing materials on the mark-making tables, enabling them to create their own ideas. They have many opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills for a variety of different purposes. For example, they make passports, travel tickets, write in the sand and are encouraged to write their names on their paintings.

Children recognise numerals and are able to name them during practical activities. They are beginning to sequence as they place the numbers in order, counting as they position them. Children use mathematical language to describe size, shape, position and quantity during their play and are beginning to calculate as they figure out how many more chairs or cups they need at snack time. Children have access to multi-cultural resources during every session; they see posters and pictures of other cultures. They use puzzles, look at books, dress up and use a wide range of resources. They are currently covering holidays as a theme and are looking at differences from other countries. Children explore resources and talk about the similarities and differences between, wood, metal and plastic. They are learning about recycling and have many opportunities to examine living things. They grow plants, watch life cycles and hunt for mini beasts in the outdoor play area.

Children are able to express themselves freely during art and craft activities, creating their own ideas and finding additional resources to complete their own projects. They have access to painting and drawing materials at all times. Children sing a wide range of songs from memory and confidently match the actions to rhymes. They suggest what they would like to sing and staff question the children about the next verse, helping them to use their memories and speak in a large group situation. Children use their imaginations well as they set up picnics and pretend to make tea for each other. They create characters and negotiate roles with each other in the home corner and role-play activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are treated as individuals and their own needs are met effectively because staff get to know them and their families extremely well. Comprehensive policies are in place and staff have a very good understanding of equal opportunities. All children have equal access and time to take part in the extensive range of activities. Children have access to a range of resources that show positive images and reflect a diverse society. The group also covers festivals from other cultures to help the children gain a better understanding of the world around them. For example, they cover Chinese New Year and Divali. The children also talk about where food comes from and have access to books, puzzles, dolls and home corner equipment, helping to develop their understanding of the world around them.

Good systems are in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Staff work closely with the parents and have developed strong links with other agencies to ensure all the children's needs are being met in the best possible way. Children behave exceptionally well during free-play because the staff team implement the clear rules and boundaries consistently; therefore the children know exactly what is expected of them. However, staff do not deal with developing the children's listening skills consistently. Staff take the time to give clear explanations to the children, so they can see they have been treated fairly, for example, reminding the children to use aprons at the water tray to keep their clothes dry and to share and take turns. Staff are positive role models and recognise the children's efforts, building on their positive behaviour through praise

and encouragement. For example, staff thank the children for being helpful or for remembering to use their manners at snack time. As a result, during most of the session children are keen and eager to please the staff, developing a strong sense of right and wrong.

Children benefit greatly from the strong relationships between the staff and their parents. Clear and open lines of communication mean information is shared, enabling staff to cater for the individual needs of the children. Parents have access to the full range of policies and procedures, helping them to understand how the pre-school operates and the service that is provided for their children. Staff organise coffee mornings to help involve the parents in the setting and further develop the relationships. This also provides an opportunity for parents to talk to the staff in a more informal way. Staff are available to talk to the parents and answer any questions or discuss any concerns they may have. Information is also displayed on the parents' notice board and newsletters are sent out, helping to keep them up-to-date with current events.

Partnership with parents of children who are in receipt of funding for early education is good. Parents receive detailed information about the pre-school and the curriculum. The prospectus includes information about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. Parents are able to speak to their children's key worker at any time and have access to their records of achievement on request. Although staff are fully aware of the children's identified next learning steps, they are not currently sharing this valuable information with parents, to enable them to extend their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for who it provides. Children's safety is promoted effectively because the owners implement robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure all appointed staff are suitable to work with the children. However, there are currently no systems in place to monitor the ongoing suitability of the staff team. The owners actively encourage staff to attend training events to ensure their working practice is up-to-date and remains fresh. Staff complete self-assessments annually and identify their own training needs as part of the appraisal system. The owners monitor staff performance and contribution to the setting during their time in the sessions, observing staff interaction and the quality of the activities provided.

Staff arrive early and discuss the overall aims of the session while they are setting up, ensuring they are all aware of the intended learning outcomes. The sessions run smoothly because staff are extremely well organised and staff deployment is effective, ensuring the children are fully supported and well supervised at all times. The daily attendance register is accurate and well-maintained, including the children's full names and times of arrival and departure. Children's health safety and general well-being is promoted because the owners and the staff team have a very clear understanding of the inspection process and the requirements of registration. All of the required paperwork is in place and most is maintained to a high standard. However, the visitors' book does not include contact information, preventing visitors from being easily contacted if the need arises.

The leadership and management of the setting are good. The pre-school is owned by three partners who all play an extremely active role in the setting, working as supervisors during the sessions. Clear roles and responsibilities are defined, ensuring the sessions work effectively. The well established staff team work together exceptionally well and the good communication

works for the benefit of the children. The key workers share information openly about their key children's needs, ensuring all staff working with the children are fully aware of their stage of learning and development. Staff evaluate the overall sessions everyday and discuss the outcome at the end of each week. The whole staff team continue to train to refresh their ideas and develop their personal skills as they strive to continually improve the care and education of all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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:

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 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 the contact details for all visitors are recorded
- further develop procedures to monitor the ongoing suitability of staff.

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):

- develop the children's listening skills in group situations, to ensure all children benefit from the activities
- develop and implement a system to share information about the children's next identified learning steps 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