

St John's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY245131
Inspection date 12/03/2009
Inspector Michele Anne Villiers

Setting address St John's Centre, Greenway Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 6HA

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

St John's Pre-School opened in 2002 and operates from a church hall. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school is situated in the Appleton area of Widnes and serves the local community. It is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 during school term time only.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 29 children, aged from two years old up to five years old on roll. The setting supports children with learning disabilities.

There are five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall all major aspects of the provision are satisfactory and good in some respects. The play room is very welcoming and creatively organised, with toys and resources and there is an excellent outside play area for children to explore and gain in confidence. Children progress well in all areas of their development and they are respected as individuals in an inclusive environment. Health and safety checks are informally conducted daily, but there is not a robust risk assessment that identifies all areas of play, or specific outings. Plans for the future are suitably identified, but a formalised self-evaluation system is not in place, to further monitor the provision and clearly identify areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- use self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement and meaningfully involve staff, parents and carers and use as a basis of ongoing internal review
- provide more positive images that challenge the children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, and disabilities
- ensure that key practitioners offer extra support to children in new situations or when settling in and separating from parent or carer.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- formalise the risk assessments for indoors and outings, ensuring they identify all aspects of the environment and cover anything with which a child may come into contact and determine the regularity of these checks (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

31/03/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Most regulatory documentation is in place and children are safeguarded, through close supervision and the staff's awareness of child protection issues and how to protect children. Daily safety checks are conducted on the toys and premises. However, there is not a regularly reviewed and maintained record of risk assessments, that identifies all aspects of the environment, including specific outings, in order to fully minimise potential hazards. All staff are qualified in childcare and suitably deployed, to give children maximum support. Most children happily enter the pre-school, although some children are initially a little fractious and sometimes receive insufficient help to settle in and part from their parents or carers.

Recommendations from the previous inspection have been met, with updated policies and information about the learning programme, to share with parents. Staff keep up-to-date with training and attend relevant workshops. The manager monitors the provision, through observation and staff discussion, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement. However, self-evaluation is not recorded and does not include meaningful contributions from parents, in relation to the new Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents are welcome in the setting at any time and they speak positively about the activities provided and the progress their children make. They may stay with their children, to help settle them in and support their play. The effective key worker system, enables staff to become knowledgeable about each child's individual needs and to provide appropriate support for each child. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff support the children well, especially in small group situations, to motivate their learning. Children move freely between indoors and outdoors and planning is used effectively, to ensure activities are challenging and appropriate to each child's level of development. The outside play space is a particular strength and allows opportunities for children to be creative, to construct, to take risks and to develop their full range of physical movement. They run around, balance on stepping stones, skilfully learn to use a small climbing wall and climb wooden ladders, leading to a play house with a curved slide. They crawl through tunnels, use wheeled toys, swings and a small trampoline. Children examine and explore different textured materials, digging and planting seeds and sensory plants. Conifer trees provide shelter and hiding places and wooden benches are used to sit and rest.

Indoors, staff introduce different props to support the children's learning, such as books, pictures, and soft toys. For example, after reading a story about Elmer, the colourful patchwork elephant, they make a collage picture of him, reinforcing their understanding of colours and shapes and they play with the soft Elmer toy. The story helps children to learn about respecting and loving differences in people and

friends and how everyone has unique attributes. Some toys are available that represent diversity, such as ethnic dolls, a doll's wheelchair and different skin tone crayons, but these are not always fully integrated into everyday play, with limited books, puzzles and posters, reflecting positive images.

The children's independence is very much encouraged. They learn to dress themselves for outdoor play and pour their own drinks at snack time. They develop a good understanding of personal hygiene, with reminders to wash their hands and planned activities on dental care. Snacks are balanced with suitably nutritious food for their health and growth and outside they grow strawberries and plant peas.

During play, children count and discuss numbers, shapes and positions. They learn to recognise numerals, when playing number games and puzzles and count how many children are present during registration. Children engage in meaningful conversations and staff use good questioning, to reinforce their language skills. They have many opportunities to mark-make, creating patterns in the sand and drawing and older children practise writing their own names. Children are inquisitive learners. They have free access to a computer and become competent at manoeuvring the mouse and playing simple games. When new dressing-up clothes are introduced, they delight in role play and excitedly admire themselves in the mirror, taking on super hero characters and using their imagination well.

Staff use observation well, to assess the children's progress and they record the information in the children's Learning Journey. Initial profiles are completed with the parents, to identify the children's starting point and portfolios include photographs of the children at home. Parental involvement is encouraged and parents are invited to join in activities and to share their own knowledge and expertise. The setting provides good support to those children who have special needs, adapting activities accordingly and developing a routine, to help all children socialise and feel secure.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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