

St Saviours Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123588
Inspection date	03/03/2009
Inspector	Hilary Preece
Setting address	St Saviours Church Hall, Sandpit Lane, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4DF
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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 report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

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 Saviour's Pre-school is a privately run group which opened in 1999 and is situated in central St Albans. It operates from St Saviour's Church Hall, Sandpit Lane and children have access to a large, spacious hall, an adjoining smaller room and toilets. There are currently no toilet facilities providing access for disabled users. There is a kitchen and storage facilities available. Children have access to an enclosed outside play area and garden.

The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 44 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 50 children aged from two years to under five years on roll and the setting is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education to children aged two, three and four. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The setting welcomes and supports children who have English as an additional language and learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school is open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.00 and a lunch club runs on Wednesdays and Fridays from 12.00 until 12.45.

St Saviour's pre-school is run by joint owners. One is an Early Years teacher who is currently working towards the Early Years Professional Status award and the other has an NVQ Level 3 qualification in Early Years Care and Education. There are a further nine members of staff who work with the children. Over half the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least NVQ Level 2. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Well developed knowledge of each child's individual needs ensures that all aspects of children's welfare and learning are promoted successfully. Children's progress is carefully monitored, including identifying and providing additional support as early as possible, to ensure that all children achieve to their potential. A key strength is the exemplary partnerships that exist between the setting, parents and other agencies who all work closely together in order to meet children's needs. Consequently, children make excellent progress in their learning and development given their starting points. Most procedures that contribute effectively to children's safety, security and good health are robust and ensure the setting runs efficiently. There is a strong capacity to maintain continuous improvement due to ongoing and effective self-evaluation processes that successfully target areas for future improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further inclusive practice by ensuring that the cultures, languages and backgrounds of all children that attend are represented in the environment, resources and activities
- review organisation of records on children to ensure confidentiality is maintained when viewed by parents.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school benefits from strong leadership. The management team values the dedication and views of it's staff and encourages their full participation in all aspects of the provision. This means that adults share a common sense of purpose in promoting positive experiences for children. Self-evaluation processes also take into account the views of children and their parents and carers. This enables the setting to respond effectively to the needs of its users. Monitoring of the curriculum and children's progress is rigorous. Plans for future improvements are clear, realistic and well targeted in order to enhance outcomes for children.

The setting has developed exceptionally strong partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies in the wider community that enable children to settle in easily and make smooth transitions to nursery and school. Parents are fully informed about all aspects of the provision and involved in their children's learning right from the start. For example, induction meetings provide parents with high quality information about the curriculum and how they can support their children while at pre-school and nursery. Excellent communication and links between the setting and home ensure children benefit from continuity of care. Parents regularly contribute to their children's records by sharing family experiences their children have had. This gives staff valuable insight into the uniqueness of each child that they use to extend children's learning through discussion and activities. Parents consulted at inspection speak extremely highly of the pre-school. They particularly value the excellent communication, the standard of achievement reached by the children, and the fact that their children are happy in the setting.

The records, policies and procedures that are required for the safe and efficient management of the EYFS are generally robust and well managed. Health and hygiene practices are consistently followed and children's individual medical needs are managed safely. Secure procedures are followed to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. These include robust vetting systems, induction training and informal appraisals. Arrangements for safeguarding children are rigorous, reviewed at regular intervals and confidently understood by staff. The indoor and outdoor spaces, furniture and equipment are used imaginatively to allow children to explore their environment safely. Appropriate risk assessment records are maintained that show how children's safety and security is monitored. Records of children's progress are very well maintained and stored securely when not in use. However, confidentiality may be compromised at times as arrangements for presenting these records to parents means that they may inadvertently be viewed by others.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children thrive in this environment. They make excellent progress in their learning and development due to high quality support from staff and exceptionally well organised sessions. Older children, for example, benefit from separate nursery sessions where they enjoy focused activities to develop their literacy and numeracy whilst younger children develop their confidence and independence in free play. The environment is stimulating and well resourced to support children's freedom to make choices in their play. Resources and activities represent the general diversity of the local and wider community but do not necessarily reflect the backgrounds of all the children who attend the setting. The planned curriculum is broad, well balanced and flexible enough to be adapted to meet children's individual needs and interests. For example, a child's request to re-visit and act out a favourite story using props is accommodated willingly into the session. This ensures children remain motivated at all times. Children's individual needs are supported extremely well by key workers who build positive relationships with children in their groups. This enables children to settle well and feel secure. Key workers continually observe children during play and use their assessments to identify and plan the next steps in their learning based on individual needs and interests. The superb way in which both key workers and parents frequently contribute to these records leads to enhanced learning and exceptional continuity of care.

Children arrive at the setting with great enthusiasm and excitement. They display highly positive attitudes to joining in with activities and routines. Children cooperate and understand expectations exceptionally well. For example, at tidy up time all children work together to roll up play mats, pack toys in boxes and carry and stack small chairs so they are safely out of the way. Children show great independence in managing to do things for themselves. They respectfully hang up their coats and aprons after use and learn to manage their personal care needs when washing their hands and selecting tissues to blow their noses. Such positive behaviour, confidence and independence means children are very well prepared to make the transition to nursery or school.

All staff make excellent use of questioning to challenge children's thinking and understanding. The development of children's early literacy skills is supported by the exceptionally well planned environment. Children confidently read road signs and number plates on their bikes, identify their name cards and experiment with mark-making by writing out doctors' notes in the role play area. Older children confidently identify the initial sound of their names and explore sounds and rhyming words during story sessions. Children operate some technological resources with skill. They are fascinated by a programmable bug and successfully manage to operate the hand control to manoeuvre the bug forward, left or right around a track. This develops careful concentration and hand-eye coordination. Numeracy and problem-solving skills are developed very well through stories, rhymes and routines. Children confidently count out apple slices and perform simple addition and subtraction when questions are posed by staff.

Children's welfare and understanding of how they can contribute to keeping themselves safe and healthy is promoted very effectively. They learn to use tools

such as children's knives to cut up their fruit because staff consistently reinforce how these should be used safely. Sensitive explanations are provided so children learn the consequences of what happens if they run about without looking where they are going. Space is used creatively to allow children freedom to explore safely. They ride their bikes in a separate area of the garden to avoid accidents and practise road safety using speed limit and stop signs to act out crossing the road safely. Children enjoy being health and active in many different ways. They examine different types of seeds inside fruits and use their senses to taste and smell a selection of tropical fruits as part of a topic on health. They enjoy nutritious snacks with plentiful discussion about the benefits of these foods on their growing bodies. Children participate enthusiastically in movement to music sessions. They confidently follow instructions to move their bodies in different ways and become aware that the heart beats faster after exertion. Outdoor play takes many forms including playing parachute games, ring games, using apparatus and enjoying special snowy days.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.