



## St Josephs' Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	402029
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 October 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Greg Wolff
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Parish Hall, Highview Crescent, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 1BJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Joseph's Pre-School Committee
<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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Josephs' Pre-School opened in approximately 1960. It operates from St Josephs' Parish Hall in Hutton.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 school term time only.

There are currently 38 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 34

children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school supports a small number of children with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs 10 staff. Six of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn to be healthy. They adopt good hygiene routines, such as hand-washing after toileting and before snack and after messy activities such as painting or collage. Practitioners record all accidents and obtain signatures from parents and carers to show they have been informed. A number of practitioners have completed first aid training to help them respond to accidents appropriately and procedures are also in place to care for children should they become sick on the premises.

Children are able to have snacks and drinks at set times and in line with their dietary requirements. Drinking water is available for children to take for themselves if they become thirsty. Children have healthy snacks and are further helped to become aware of healthy eating through planned activities and discussions.

Children have daily physical play either inside or outside, weather permitting. They enjoy being active, but the limited opportunities provided by practitioners mean that children are not able to be energetic during these times. They learn to move in different ways and using equipment, including a small climbing frame, tricycles and scooters. All children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their small motor skills by using a variety of tools and other equipment.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children learn to keep themselves safe in the welcoming setting where they are able to freely move around the learning environment across the session. Practitioners are vigilant about children's safety and ensure this by the highly effective implementation of thorough daily risk assessments and exceptionally detailed health and safety policies and procedures across the provision. Children talk about safe practice, for example they recognise that they must not throw ice as it can hurt their own or other children's eyes.

Children are well protected because practitioners have an in-depth knowledge of child protection issues, recognise their role and responsibilities and know how to implement their own and local child protection procedures. The recording of all staff, children and visitors to and from the preschool, detailed policies for the collection and non-collection of children and arrangements for recording pre-existing injuries contribute to ensuring children are safeguarded from harm.

Children benefit enormously from the well organised and vibrant learning environment and an extensive range of equipment and resources is available suitable for the ages of children attending. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure equipment is safe and well maintained. Children access their own resources independently across the provision, which helps to develop and sustain extremely high levels of independence.

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

The provision is good.

All children benefit from their access to a balanced range of activities and play opportunities that support their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development.

The older children have separate sessions where activities are organised to meet their specific needs. They learn to choose activities from the range available with growing independence and their learning is reinforced during mixed sessions. The use of a 'Transition Box' helps to prepare them for starting school, and they make regular visits to the main school building with practitioners to ensure that they feel comfortable there.

Children do not have to wait for equipment as there is plenty available to allow them to play alongside each other. Practitioners are not yet all familiar with the best practice guidance described within the 'Birth to three matters' framework but intend expanding their knowledge and skills to enhance the provision.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most practitioners have a secure knowledge of the foundation stage. The pre-school's planning covers all six areas of learning. It provides clear links to the early learning goals for focus activities and demonstrates an understanding of the need to differentiate activities to allow for the range of children present. Less confident practitioners do not yet have sufficient information to assist them in promoting learning and providing appropriate challenge whilst children are involved in activities. All practitioners interact well with the children and are actively involved in the activities alongside them. They ask the children appropriate open-ended questions to confirm their understanding and prompt them to move on in their thinking.

Children's development is observed and assessed thoroughly during daily activities. Notes are recorded centrally and then transferred to each child's record of achievement towards the early learning goals. By observing children and their achievements throughout the session and not only in particular activities, practitioners ensure that they know where each child's development is at any given time. There is a clear link between the assessment records and planning which shows how they are continuing to meet the children's developmental needs at all times and help them take the next steps.

Children are keen to learn and actively involved throughout the session. They form

strong relationships with each other and with practitioners. They make choices from the equipment available and are independent in their personal care. Children succeed at a range of puzzles, but are quite often operating well within their capabilities. Circle time is very good and used well by practitioners to promote the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, communication skills and counting. The children also learn to confidently share events and experiences from their home-life with others.

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

The provision is good.

Children are able to access few resources that promote diversity and equal opportunity for all. There is little acknowledgement of a range of faiths and cultures with the exception of well known celebrations at particular times of the year.

Practitioners work very well with parents, carers and other professionals to support all children, including those with special needs. They take time to gather information about each of the children's needs from parents and carers, which ensures that they are well supported in meeting the needs of all the children attending the group.

Children are well behaved. Practitioners have adopted strategies to teach the children to behave acceptably, and are consistent and positive in their approach to behaviour management. Continued training ensures that all practitioners remain up to date with current techniques and they discuss and implement these as a team.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Practitioners keep parents and carers well informed through an abundance of information about early years, the foundation stage, planning and general practices in the group. This is made available in the hall and on the notice-boards. Parents and carers are made aware they can see their children's development records and termly meetings with their key workers are offered. They are told about topics and themes through newsletters. Practitioners also give daily verbal feedback and often write about the children's learning and achievements on work that is sent home. Effective relationships allow parents and carers to work well with staff to meet all the children's developmental needs.

Overall, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

All required documentation, policies and procedures are in place. Ofsted is kept informed about practitioner changes and the required checks are completed for new members of staff. The group induct their practitioners well, and carry out appraisals regularly. Staff training is organised to meet individual needs as well as the needs of the group to continually improve the provision. Effective deployment of practitioners ensures that unvetted persons are prevented from accessing premises or having unsupervised contact with children and that required staff to child ratios are met at all

times.

The practitioners use the premises well to give the children plenty of space to play and learn and provide a balanced range of activities. This is enhanced further because the numbers of children attending each session have been kept lower than the registration condition actually permits. Although the outside area is used each session, it is not yet being used to its full potential as a learning environment.

The leadership and management of the group is good. Practitioners work well together to come up with ideas for planning which is then recorded by the manager. Although not all practitioners are confident in their knowledge and understanding of the foundation stage, training has been organised to meet their needs and those of the group, in delivering their planned 'curriculum'. The manager has implemented a system to monitor the provision of nursery education and this is proving to be effective in identifying areas for future training.

Overall, the needs of the full range of children who attend are met.

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

Since the last inspection, the pre-school has developed a consistent and effective method of managing children's behaviour. Children are praised and encouraged and are kept fully engaged by the activities on offer. This ensures that they benefit from a growing sense of confidence and self-esteem.

Parents are invited to see children's development records regularly and this ensures that children benefit from their support outside the pre-school setting.

Teaching methods for particular groups of children are now tailored to meet their individual needs. For example, the oldest children now attend their own sessions which help with the transition to school. The knowledge and skills they gain at these times is reinforced by activities presented to them in whole group sessions.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

## **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):

- improve provision for physical activity by continuing to develop the outdoor area and providing further resources (also applies to nursery education)
- provide resources and activities which promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity

### **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):

- provide opportunities for more able children to extend their knowledge and learn new skills through activities and interaction with practitioners.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)