



St Philips Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315248
Inspection date	03 October 2005
Inspector	Lynda, Margaret Ronan
Setting Address	St Philips Community School, Westbrook Centre, Westbrook, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 8UE
Telephone number	07960 428 892
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Registered person	St Philips Playgroup
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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet 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. Philips Pre-school was registered in 2001. The pre-school is situated within St. Philips Community School in Westbrook, Warrington. It is close to the shopping centre, local schools and serves the local community. Children have the use of two rooms and an outside play area and, on occasion, the large school hall.

The playgroup operates term time only. It is open from 12.30 to 15.00 on Monday

and 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00 on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

There are 32 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions during the week. Currently, 32 children receive nursery funding. The playgroup is able to offer support to children with special needs and to those for whom English is an additional language.

There is one full-time member of staff and three part-time staff who work directly with the children. Three staff, including the manager, hold a suitable early years qualification. The provision receives support from Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children develop a good understanding of their bodies and keeping healthy whilst enjoying running and chasing large inflatable balls outside. They discuss being hot and their hearts beating fast and know exercise is good for them and that they need a drink of water. Planned activities such as a visit from the dentist further support children's knowledge of not only their bodies but also a healthy diet.

Outdoor play and the use of bikes and balancing equipment as well as a parachute provide children with a variety of experiences to explore their physical capabilities, however these are limited by being timetabled only once a week. Children develop a range of physical skills indoors and skilfully use scissors, knives, paintbrushes and cutters. They have some opportunity to use a wide variety of tools including wooden screwdrivers, hole punches and staplers and baking equipment.

Children benefit from a healthy daily menu of toast and fresh fruit. Everyday routines, such as washing hands at appropriate times, ensure children learn about good hygiene to protect them from germs. Information about dietary requirements is sought from parents but has not, in every instance, been effectively shared with staff: this could result in parental wishes not being observed or in children being put at risk.

Insecure knowledge of the National Standards and lack of rigour in maintaining documentation has led to a mandatory requirement not being met. The group have not sought written permission from parents prior to administering medicine and have not shared effectively information between staff about the medication. This together with a failure to record each administration of medication puts children at risk.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children's safety is monitored through the day-to-day informal risk assessments carried out by staff. Faults observed and steps taken to minimise potential dangers are recorded; this sound practice ensures children are kept safe. Management have not accessed the risk assessment of the building nor kept a record of fire drills to

ensure children are safe.

Staff pay very good attention to safety in the daily routine and to making children aware of their own safety, for example by discussing with children why they should go down the slide on their bottoms and providing safety measures such as radiator covers to prevent burns. Children also learn about keeping safe through planned activities such as road safety.

Staff describe taking good measures to ensure children are safe when, for example, they visit the woods or supermarket, however they do not have a written outings policy which would allow parents to assess its suitability.

The environment is planned to meet the needs of children both indoors and outside. Children have opportunity to be active, play messily, explore and experiment, for example whilst planting sunflowers in the garden or creating large paintings indoors. Equipment and toys are well selected and imaginatively used to benefit children.

Staff are all vetted and take care children are supervised to ensure they are protected. Management's and staff's inadequate knowledge of the National Standards, the Area Child Protection Committees Procedures and the group's own child protection policy results in a mandatory requirement not being met. This places children at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well cared for. Staff give undivided attention to children, sitting alongside them on the floor and at tables, becoming engrossed in the children's activity. They pay good attention to ensuring children feel secure, for example when a child becomes upset by a noisy activity, he is well supported and staff readily provide the cuddle he requests.

Staff provide interesting activities for children and alternate resources to ensure daily variety for children. Children, however access only the resources that are put out by staff and so have limited opportunities to revisit and consolidate skills and knowledge they are acquiring during independent play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The children are making good progress towards the early learning goals because staff provide opportunities in each of the six areas of learning and support children very well to think and explore their environment.

Children enjoy learning and are keen to access all the activities, familiar and new. They have good opportunities to learn through practical experiences.

Children develop memory skills playing 'Hedgehogs' - who have staff hidden under

the blanket whilst the other children were playing? They become competent mathematicians: observing and matching patterns and measuring themselves against a wall chart and taking photos and comparing how much they have grown in a term. They learn to be observant by examining a frog's feet. Are they different from ours? Why?

They learn early reading skills, listening carefully to clapped rhythms and the start sounds of words. They, however, have fewer opportunities to practise reading skills, including recognising numbers as labels, independently in the environment.

Children take the pre-school toy animal home and complete his diary: he visits the shops; plays on a game boy; visits Dubai and, in this way, they learn about community and being social. They develop dexterity using a wide variety of tools, a computer mouse and constructing imaginatively with different construction toys. They learn about the world and themselves discussing why there is a window in the roof and brushing giant teeth brought by the dentist. They are not fully supported to develop their imaginations as they have limited access to role play opportunities.

Staff plan activities and identify learning objectives for children using the Foundation Stage Curriculum, however these are not securely linked with what children can do and the next stages in their learning. Staff are skilled, in practice, in adapting situations and planned activities to meet the needs of children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are treated as individuals because staff have a good knowledge of them and their homes, often having worked with older siblings. Children who have special educational needs make good progress because the supportive staff work closely with them, their parents and outside agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

The behaviour of the young children attending is exemplary. They share and take turns and support each other to operate the computer in a mature and sensitive manner. Children know what is expected of them and are quick to point out transgressors. Staff have high expectations of children and provide excellent role models and generous and consistent praise of children's achievements, attitudes and good manners. The positive environment created by the staff fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

A good selection of resources and planned activities such as celebrating Chinese New Year provide children with opportunities to learn about different people in the world around them. The environment and activities do not fully reflect the cultures of children attending the group.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents receive very good information about the educational programme, in a variety of ways: watching a video; during visits with their child prior to starting the group; newsletters and posters. The staff are committed to working effectively in a

partnership of learning with parents and have a policy clearly stating the pivotal role parents take. They respect parents knowledge of what their child can do and actively seek this input from parents. They enable parents to participate in their children's learning, through a newsletter explaining what their child will be doing in the coming weeks and suggesting ways parents can help, be it singing the same songs or looking for numbers in the environment with their child.

Parents report their children are happy in the setting, have made friends and are learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is promoted through the good organisation of the pre-school. For example, at the beginning of the academic year when the majority of children are young, the management employ an extra member of staff, above the required ratio, to ensure children's needs are well met and that they are cared for by well known staff.

The manager works alongside the staff, providing them with good day-to-day support. The staff work as an effective, established team. They communicate well to support the smooth running of the pre-school. Children benefit from the calm, ordered atmosphere and consistent approach.

Management have ensured all staff are qualified to level three and are vetted. They ensure documentation is maintained confidentially. The registration certificate is not displayed.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The management are committed to the improvement of standards in pre-school and support staff positively to attend training to promote their professional development.

Management have instituted an assessment system that allows individual children's progress to be monitored and have evaluated its effectiveness. They do not monitor the delivery of the curriculum to the whole group to ensure a balanced curriculum. They have not ensured all staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how it is planned. They have not ensured all mandatory requirements are met.

Overall, the needs of children who attend are not met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a number of issues for improvement were identified.

Very good progress has been made in:

ensuring parents have an understanding of the curriculum being presented to their

children. Systems are in place to positively enable them to contribute to their children's assessments. An effective partnership in learning means children are eager to learn and share their experiences with staff and parents;

providing drinking water at all times. Children are observed to independently access water, their well-being is actively supported;

recording children's attendance. Systems now clearly show exact times when children are present and accident records are all countersigned by parents: these systems contribute effectively to children's safety.

Generally good progress has been made in:

providing systems to evaluate activities. A good system to evaluate activities has been put in place and provides staff the opportunity to modify activities to meet individual needs and to identify the next steps in learning. The poor links between observations of children and this system limit its effectiveness;

monitoring the delivery of a broad spectrum of experience to children. A system to monitor what each child has achieved in each area of learning has been introduced and effectively shows any gaps in that child's learning. This has not been extended to identify potential gaps in the overall provision which could lead to bias in the curriculum being undetected. Management have agreed to extend the system to monitor overall delivery of the curriculum.

Limited progress has been made in the following areas and these remain areas for development:

improving staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The provision has sought support from the advisory service but, as yet, have not been able to access training for those staff who have not previously attended training in this area. This particularly impacts on staff's ability to contribute to the planning process and their ownership of it. This occasionally results in inappropriate challenges being set for children;

organising the environment to support children's independent learning. Some progress has been made in this area, however children are observed not to access resources independently, other than those put out for them. This limits children's ability to organise and consolidate their own learning and remains a recommendation at this inspection;

devising an induction, recruitment and selection policy. An induction process is in place for students on placement. This remains an area for development to ensure future staff are suitably experienced and qualified to meet the needs of the children attending;

application of the procedure to ensure parents sign for each administration of medication. The system has not been satisfactorily operated: as a result, children are at risk.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. 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.

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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, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- obtain written permission from parents before administering medication to children and keep accurate written records of all medicines administered to children
- ensure that the child protection procedure complies with those of the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and includes a procedure to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff.

These actions are set out in a **notice of action to improve** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

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):

- use observations and assessments, of what children can do, to identify the next stepping stone in their learning and to inform short term planning
- organise the environment to further support children's freedom to independently choose resources and activities to consolidate their learning.

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