



St Johns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	511317
Inspection date	20 October 2005
Inspector	Carol Patricia Willett
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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 John's Pre-School has been run by its present owner since 1993. It operates from a church hall located in the centre of Hook. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 26 children from 2 years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. This includes 16 funded 3 and 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports children with special needs. There are no children on roll who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens for five sessions, rising through the academic year to eight sessions, from Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00, and 12:30 until 15:00. Children bring a packed lunch to afternoon sessions.

There are five part-time staff working with the children. Three have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor through the area cluster-group meetings. Support and advice is also received from the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other professionals.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about healthy living. They learn about good hygiene practices as they wash their hands at appropriate times such as before snacks and after messy play. Children are independent in their self care skills as the layout of the premises enables children to confidently use the toilet facilities. They consistently wash and dry their hands without prompting from the staff. They know they need to use aprons to protect their clothes when painting and playing with water and they change their shoes when they arrive at pre-school.

Children learn about healthy eating as staff provide them with healthy options at snack time. They enjoy grapes and cheese, toast and vegetables. Children confidently say what they like and tell staff they are not allowed to eat certain foods, for example, one child has an allergy and tells staff he must not eat cheese. Documentation adequately details children's dietary requirements which staff follow when providing food for snacks and activities such as food tasting. Children choose between milk or juice but staff do not fully develop their independence skills by allowing the children to pour their own drinks at snack time.

Children develop good manipulative skills as staff provide a varied range of tools and resources and interesting activities to promote their development. Children enjoy painting with brushes and sponges. They like using pencils and crayons to write and draw and competently complete jigsaw puzzles. They confidently construct models with the wooden train track and a variety of commercial construction sets showing good dexterity and competence. Children enjoy jumping on the trampoline and joining in circle songs. They do not consistently have good opportunities to engage in physical play to develop their large muscle skills or enjoy fresh air on a daily basis, especially during the winter months.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play and learn in a safe environment, which is organised effectively to support children's development and independence. Displays of group collages and educational posters are put on the walls to provide a more welcoming environment

and encourage children's sense of belonging. Children are secure and safe as there are good safety procedures in place. Staff check the premises daily to ensure all hazards are removed and resources are safe for use. The door is kept locked to prevent children leaving unsupervised and to stop unknown people entering whilst children are present. Annual risk assessments identify areas for improvement, for example, the arrival and collection procedures have been improved.

Children access a broad range of good quality toys and play materials that are in good condition and age appropriate. Children can freely and independently select what to play with as staff select a varied range of activities and resources according to their daily planning and lay out the room in a suitable manner. Staff are vigilant when resources contain small parts. All children experience the range of resources available as activities and toys are rotated.

Children stay safe in the pre-school as staff are suitably vetted and supervise children closely at all times. Children's safety is underpinned by the careful use of documentation such as registration forms. Staff have a good understanding of the policies and procedures in place to protect children including child protection, if a child is uncollected or lost and fire evacuation. Children take place in fire drills to develop their awareness and understanding. They know that ringing 999 makes the fire engine come.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, happy, develop well and have their individual needs met as staff are kind, caring and interested. Staff have a good knowledge of the children and their parents and they are warmly greeted each session. This enables children to be confident and secure and they settle quickly into the group. Children are busily occupied throughout the session as staff provide an interesting range of activities and resources to enable them to make good progress in all areas of development.

Children join in with enthusiasm and are very cooperative responding well to changes in the session routine. They confidently engage staff and each other in conversation and are eager to share what they know. They discuss their families and experiences as their communication skills are well supported by interested, caring adults. They form good friendships and offer hugs and support to each other. They have very good opportunities to find out about each other and the wider world when they talk about their adventures with Scruff and Quackers.

Nursery Education.

Children make good progress as they experience an interesting range of activities that cover all areas of development. Children have good personal and social skills. They are friendly, sociable and cooperative and busily occupy themselves throughout the session, sharing and taking turns using resources such as the laptop and sand trays. They join in well at group times and are confident to share their experience and family life. They enthusiastically sing songs such as Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and match words and actions to Wind the Bobbin Up. The children are confident,

articulate speakers. They join in discussions with interest as they learn about magnets and talk about items they bring from home. Children develop good imaginative skills as they role play scenarios with the train set and in the hospital role play area. They do not always have good opportunities to use their own creative imaginations during adult led craft as they do not have independent access to a range of resources, tools and media.

Most of the children recognise their names as they self register as they arrive in the pre-school, put their names on the board and find their names at snack time. Some of the children can write their own names when using the sand trays and when drawing. Children know colours and shapes as part of the weekly topics. They develop good counting skills as they use maths in practical situations such as when they count the candles on the cake for a child's birthday and count the number of claps.

Children have good opportunities to learn about the passage of time as they discuss the date and observe the weather and seasons. They enjoy learning about their own and other cultures through a range of topic work which includes craft and food tasting. They try noodles for Chinese New Year and make decorations for Christmas and cards for Mothers day. The children develop control and coordination through a planned program of physical play but need more opportunities to develop large motor skills on a daily basis.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress in all areas of development because staff are caring and interested and develop good relationships with the children. Staff listen well to the children and are responsive to children when they ask questions and talk about their experiences and families at group times which encourages and develops children's communication skills. Children make good progress as the staff use good teaching strategies and questioning techniques to ensure children are interested and well motivated and further develop children's skills. Using the Foundation Stage Curriculum they plan a wide range of interesting activities linked to topics. Planning does not consistently show how activities can be adapted for children learning at different rates and is not always effectively evaluated. Observations of children's achievements and evaluations of activities are not consistently used to plan next steps in learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children come enthusiastically into group and settle well due to friendly, caring staff who greet them and their parents and carers warmly. They develop good self esteem and confidence as staff are very kind, respectful and attentive and show interest in each child, encouraging and praising their efforts. Staff encourage all children to join in and participate in activities to ensure all have equal opportunities to enjoy the provision and resources.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities which include craft and food activities and visitors to the

setting such as the local vicar and pets. They attend a children's harvest festival service at the local church bringing food items and attend the nativity play at the local infant school. They talk happily about themselves and their families as they show and tell about items they bring from home to support topics and themes. Children have very good opportunities to share their family life and events that happen to them such as hospital stays and holidays. They record, take photos and report back about their adventures with pre-school toys called Scruff and Quackers. Children with special needs make good progress as the staff respond positively and sensitively to them ensuring their well-being and that all are included. Staff work closely with parents and professionals to support the child, developing individual play plans.

Children behave well as staff have high expectations of good behaviour. Staff use distraction well and give children clear explanations and lots of praise and encouragement to develop positive behaviour. Children share and take turns and negotiate over the use of resources using a sand timer for popular resources such as the laptop and dry sand trays. Staff are very respectful and act as good role models using please and thank-you when talking to the children and encouraging them to help with tidying up.

Partnerships with parents are good. Children develop a sense of belonging and trusting relationships with the staff as the relationship between staff and parents is very good. Children's needs are effectively met as parents share useful information prior to their child starting at pre-school and have good opportunities to share informal information on a daily basis. Staff record significant information from parents in a daily diary to ensure any changes to routines are noted, for example, if children are to go home with someone else or if there is chicken pox in the group. Parent's support children's learning well as they have access to the policies and planning for nursery education which are displayed on the notice board. They are invited in to share skills and support topics by sending in items related to the themes. The children's records are freely available for parents to view and there is a social evening where parents can discuss their child's progress. Parents do not have opportunities to write comments on, or contribute to, children's achievement records or next steps in learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children settle well and are happy in the pre-school as they relate well to caring, interested staff who effectively organise the environment and resources and activities to allow the children space to play and learn. The children know the routine well and adapt easily to the changes during the session.

The leadership and management is good. Staff work effectively as a team and they are well deployed. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Children and their parents benefit from the consistent staff team who have worked together for many years and the high staffing ratio. Staff mostly plan activities and use resources well to ensure children's developmental needs are met and they make good progress to the early learning goals. Children's physical development is somewhat limited and

they need more opportunities to develop large motor skills. The manager produces an action plan to improve the pre-school and the facilities offered to the children and is looking into the provision of an enclosed outdoor area and is in discussion with the church committee.

There are sound recruiting and induction procedures in place to ensure staff are suitable to care for the children. The staff are committed to updating their knowledge and skills with several of the staff completing childcare qualifications or attending workshops. There are less effective systems in place for monitoring and evaluating some aspects of the provision for example not all staff have a sound understanding of the links between planning, assessment and evaluation. The manager and staff are keen to improve all aspects of the provision and the pre-school have started an accreditation process through a quality assurance scheme.

Suitable documentation, policies and procedures are in place to promote the care, welfare and education of the children and manage all aspects of the provision. Accident records are completed and signed by parents to ensure they are kept informed but recording is not confidential. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school were required to improve snack time to develop children's independence; provide opportunities for parents to contribute to children's assessment records; clarify children's progress on assessment records and identify activities in planning to support children's progression. They were also required to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand drying and ensure all records relating to day care activities are in place. Whilst an action plan is in place to improve these issues some still need further development.

The pre-school have made improvements to hand drying procedures by providing paper towels ensuring the risk of cross infections are minimised. All required records for day care are in place and contain sufficient detail to safeguard children's health and safety.

Children do not pour their own drinks at snack time which limits their independence and opportunities to develop these skills and this could be further improved. Parents are given opportunities to see and discuss children's assessment records but there are no formal opportunities for them to write comments or contribute to children's next steps in learning. This is carried forward for improvement. Planning does not show how activities are adapted for children learning at different rates which means activities are not always sufficiently prepared for children who are more able and so do not always provide sufficient challenge. Activities are not sufficiently evaluated to show how children's achievements link to planning their next steps. This is carried forward for improvement.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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

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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):

- provide more opportunities for children to develop their large motor skills during daily play
- ensure accident recording maintains children's confidentiality
- provide opportunities for parents to write comments on children's records and enable them to contribute to children's next steps in learning

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 knowledge and understanding of all staff to enable the links between planning, observations, evaluation and assessment to be used more effectively in planning for the children's next steps; develop planning sheets to show how activities will be adapted for children learning at different rates.

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