



## **St Josephs Hilltots Pre School Playgroup**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY299203
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Karen Elizabeth Screen
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Josephs School, Front Street, Nympsfield, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3TY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453860311
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	St Josephs Hilltots Pre School Playgroup
<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 satisfactory. 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 Joseph's Hilltots Pre-School Group is run by a committee and has charitable status. The playgroup operates from St. Joseph's Primary School in Nympsfield, near Stonehouse in Gloucestershire. It has been registered since 2001. The group occupies a classroom, which they share with an after school club. Children are able to use the school hall, playground and field.

The playgroup is open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday between 09.00 and 12.00 during

school terms. There are currently 12 children on roll of whom 10 receive nursery education funding. A team of two staff are employed. Both hold level three qualifications, a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Early Years Care and Education, and a Diploma in Nursery Nursing. The group is supported by a Foundation Stage Consultant and a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are very independent in their personal care. Younger children who need assistance in completing personal tasks, receive a good level of support. Children are aware of the importance of personal hygiene, and know to wash their hands after visiting the toilets. Children's health is championed within an environment where the staff have a clear understanding of the treatment of minor injuries. Children are encouraged to rest quietly if they appear tired or unwell. Cuddles and comfort are given and their feelings acknowledged. The necessity of contacting parents if symptoms persist is understood and emergency contact number are easily available at all times. However, children's health is not safeguarded in the event of an emergency, because staff have not requested written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment.

Children are learning to appreciate foods which help them to grow and thrive. They enjoy the wide range and variety of wholesome snacks provided, and understand which foods are good for them. They enjoy buttering their own crisp bread, but are not involved in preparing the snacks, such as cutting up the apples, bananas, melon and other fruits. They pour their own drinks at snack-time, but are not able to help themselves if they are thirsty at other times of the day.

Children have a positive attitude to exercise, and usually enjoy daily exercise outside in the fresh air. Staff also make provision within their planning for children to enjoy the benefits of the school hall facilities, for example to practise balancing on beams and to take part in regular energetic drama sessions; managed by a parent who is a qualified drama teacher. Children are developing their eye-hand coordination as they learn to use scissors, cutting out pre-printed numerals by themselves and sticking them down in the correct order. They are ably supported with well-timed assistance from staff when appropriate.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are interested and want to play with the available toys and resources. Although there are many well-chosen and good quality resources, children are unable to independently select craft materials for themselves, in order to extend their activities and develop their own ideas. In addition, children are unable to reach the

books and have difficulty entering and leaving the 'home corner'. This is because the staff and committee are not sufficiently proactive in addressing the organisation of the environment, such as arranging safe and suitable storage solutions for their own, and for the out of school club resources, in this shared accommodation.

Children's safety is promoted by enlisting parents' support in following relevant procedures when collecting their children; and by staff taking prompt action to address any identified risks. The group have all of the required permissions and procedures in place to safeguard children's welfare, but do not always ensure that records of accidents are dated.

Children are well protected by knowledgeable staff who are clear about the procedures to follow in managing child protection concerns. They are aware of the possible signs of children at risk, and of their responsibility to report their concerns according to local child protection procedures.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from staff who are interested in what they say and do. Their confidence and self-esteem are raised by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. They make friends with their peers and develop excellent relationships with the well-established staff team. Staff are warm and attentive and the children respond by smiling when they make eye contact. Children are happy and keen to attend. For example, a young child bounds into the room and heads straight for a member of staff, to share his news. Children are curious and have a positive approach to new experiences. Staff offer effective support through well-judged interventions, such as knowing when to assist and when to leave children to explore on their own. Children make confident choices from the activities and experiences provided, and are interested and enjoy their play. However, weaknesses exist in the range and types of materials with which children can regularly express their creativity; and in the chances for children to extend creative opportunities for themselves.

The plans and patterns within the day are well established. Children are beginning to predict what will happen next and to extend their skills in a secure environment. Planning is undertaken for pre-school children and is used as a basis for the day. These are not rigid however, and are subject to change according to according to the children's interests and needs. Staff do not specifically plan the sessions with the two-year olds in mind. They recognise that the Birth to three matters framework is a useful tool for planning appropriate experiences and tracking children's progress, but do not use it to support their work with young children.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's learning is reinforced through the use of effective questioning and prompting. Individual staff knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals is good. However, plans do not clearly show the purpose of activities, how the children will be grouped, or how staff are to be deployed. This is reflected in the organisation of the

environment and resources and impacts upon the choices children are able to make for themselves. Staff make some adaptations to short term planning, but do not systematically plan how activities and experiences can be adapted to suit all ages, abilities and learning styles. Staff make regular observations and assessments, but these are not effectively linked to planning to help children to build on what they already know. Short term plans are not always completed, with the result that staff and parent helpers need to rely heavily on their memory and verbal instructions. Appropriate support is available to children with learning difficulties/needs, and to their families. Staff are committed to undertaking any relevant training needed in order to support children's individual needs.

Children respond well in a caring environment where they learn to consider other people's needs as well as their own. As they read the story 'Where's My Teddy', they are encouraged to consider how they would feel if they lost their Teddy. Children learn to be co-operative and work well together; for example two children collaborating over who will ride and who will push their 'car' around the playground. Children are confident and show high levels of concentration. For example, a boy who has seen a deer on his way to pre-school, spends all of his free time painting one from a picture in a reference book. Children are aware of behavioural expectations and stop to listen when staff give instructions to the whole group. They listen intently to stories and answer related questions posed by staff.

Children demonstrate good speaking skills, such as describing the texture of the bananas as "slimy". Supportive staff act as good role models and take time to listen. Children talk activities through and reflect and modify what they are doing. For example, a child ponders how he is going to paint the tail white "because there's no white paint" and eagerly embraces the inspector's suggestion of using cotton wool for the tail. Children's developing language and ability to communicate, is supported well by staff using a variety of effective methods to prompt children's thinking; for example through involvement in their activities. Children relish sitting in comfy chairs as they listen and anticipate the sequence of events in one of their favourite stories, 'Where's My Teddy?'

Children show a keen interest in numbers and counting. Their understanding of simple calculations is fostered in everyday activities, such as counting out the number of cups needed for snack time. They enjoy singing nursery rhymes, learning to subtract by one as they sing 'Five Little Speckled Frogs. Older children show confidence as they offer solutions to mathematical problems posed by staff, such as "how many will we have, if we add one more?" Children benefit from individual attention as they learn about volume, through pouring water into different sized containers and estimating which holds the most.

Children have a very good understanding of past, present, future and change over time. They enjoy examining objects and living things to find out more about them. They are encouraged to find out more about the natural world through direct involvement. For example, as they carefully handle a birds nest, they notice that it is made up of many different sized twigs and leaves and some 'man-made' items. The group discussion moves on to the life cycle of caterpillars and butterflies, and how birds feed their young on caterpillars. A child volunteers that "planes fly, but don't eat anything". After a short moment for thought, a member of staff points out that,

"planes 'eat' fuel to make them fly". The child thinks for a moment, and nods her agreement. Children rarely use the computer, this is because they are given too little support to develop their knowledge and understanding of how computers work.

Children competently and confidently use a range of large equipment such as trikes, skilfully weaving in and out and avoiding crashing into others. Children collaborate well in devising games which require each to play their part, for example four children making a moving human train. Children show increasing awareness of their own bodily needs, for example during snack time, an older child remarks that she is "still hungry" and would like to "make a jam sandwich". She settles for jam and butter on a cracker, which she spreads for herself. Children are taught to handle and control small objects such as zips and press studs. However they are set too few challenges to develop their physical skills through running, swinging, pulling and jumping.

Children enjoy combining different media and materials, but there are weaknesses in the range and types of materials with which children can explore and express their creativity. In addition, the organisation of the craft materials, does not encourage children to extend adult or child-led activities and experiences. Children are supported to develop their own ideas as they draw on their personal experiences and imagination. They play along side other children who are engaged in the same theme, such as pretending to cook a meal for their family. Children enjoy construction for a purpose, for example building a 'house' for their animals. However there are few materials within easy reach, with which children can build large-scale constructions such as 'dens'.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn about the different activities and the people involved in their rural community. Children's awareness of features within their local environment is raised through a number of planned and impromptu outings to the local community, also through regular visits from community workers such as the road safety officer. Children learn to value and appreciate each other's similarities and differences. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through books and resources especially chosen to reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Children are very well behaved. Staff provide excellent role models through their calm and polite manner and have reasonable and realistic expectations of children's behaviour. They set and maintain clear and consistent limits, using positive behaviour strategies.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children are developing a sense of belonging through the warm welcome extended to their whole families. Positive relationships between staff and parents contribute to children's confidence in the staff. Parents speak positively about the settling in procedures and the warm relationships enjoyed between staff, parents and children. Parents receive general information about the pre-school when they register their children. They also receive regular newsletters and prior information about planned activities and suggestions for items to bring from home in order to support the activities. However, they receive little information about

the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage of learning; nor adequate explanations about the purpose of activities and experiences, and how these help children to learn. There are effective informal channels of communication, but few opportunities for more formal feedback on children's individual learning. Parents feel able and welcome to discuss their observations of children's learning at any time, but most are unaware that they can add their own comments and observations to their children's files. This means that records are not as full and accurate as they might be, and that parents' knowledge of their children is not sufficiently exploited, to support and develop the learning opportunities provided by the group.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Personal information is obtained before the children attend. This is regularly up-dated and filed securely for each child. Good organisation of staff rotas and supply cover, helps to ensure that well-qualified, familiar, trusted adults, care for the children in the event of staff holidays or sickness. Records and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are not always maintained, for example children's attendance records do not accurately reflect their hours of attendance.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff, children and parents have high expectations of the care and education provided in the setting. Staff and parent helpers work harmoniously together; and the leader ensures adults are deployed to good advantage to help children make good progress. Although the management review the quality of their practice and provision, they are less successful in addressing areas identified for improvement. For example, the need for reorganisation of the environment has already been highlighted but has not yet been addressed. In addition, the pre-school sessions are regularly disrupted by school staff using the room as a short-cut to other areas of the school.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

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.

## **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 satisfactory. 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):

- request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
- ensure that accurate records of attendance are maintained
- ensure that all records of accidents are dated
- improve the organisation of the environment, to ensure that storage of resources for the pre-school and the out of school club, do not have a negative impact on the care and education of the children
- improve communication and consultation with parents, paying particular attention to using a variety of ways to keep parents informed of their children's learning through play, and providing more frequent formal feedback about their children's individual learning (applies to education also).

### **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):

- systematically plan how activities and experiences can be adapted to suit all ages, abilities and learning styles
- improve the use of observations and assessments, to effectively plan the next steps in children's learning.

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