



## St Dominics Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	153554
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 October 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Sheila Collins / Anne Jeanette Faithfull
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Dominic's Primary School, Western Avenue, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 3BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	07947 015484
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Dominics Preschool 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 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 Dominic's Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1986. It operates from a purpose built building which is situated in the grounds of St Dominic Savio Primary School, which is in Woodley, Berkshire. There is also an outdoor area attached to the building, which is for the exclusive use of the pre-school children. A maximum of 20 children aged between 2 years and 5 years may attend the preschool at any one time. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.45 to 15.15, term time

only.

There are currently 34 children on roll. This includes 33 funded 3 and 4 year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, although currently there are none attending. The younger children attend the morning sessions and the older children the afternoon sessions.

A committee who employ seven staff, all of whom work on a part time basis, runs the pre-school. Of these staff, six hold a qualification, which is equivalent to NVQ3 or above. The pre-school receives support from the local authority early years workers.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children know how to keep themselves healthy and are independent in their self-care skills. They blow their own noses; wash their hands after using the toilet, after messy play and before snack. They learn very good procedures, which staff use during every day routines, for example, cleaning the tables before snack and mopping up spillages.

Staff know children's individual medical and dietary needs. Staff have good knowledge of health care matters. All staff hold current first aid certificates and deal quickly and appropriately with minor accidents to the children. All relevant documentation is in place to support children's well being.

Children are able to access drinks of water at any time, if they wish. They have a snack during each session, but the variety is limited. Children enjoy the role of being biscuit monitor; however, there are missed opportunities for the older children especially to develop their independence by pouring their own drinks.

Children enjoy a very good range of physical activities both inside and out. They show their dexterity in using tools with increasing control, through activities such as threading pasta shapes, cutting, using pencils and glue spreaders. They demonstrate good coordination and balance when using the beams. Older children take part in a planned physical exercise session each week, which involves them changing their clothes and shoes, further promoting their self-care skills.

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

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in an environment that is welcoming. They are secure and confident as they move around safely. They know the rules which are in place for their safety, such as not tipping their chairs onto two legs and throwing toys. If they forget, staff gently remind them, carefully explaining the consequences. Staff are

vigilant to ensure all aspects of the children's safety. They undertake daily checks, both inside and out and regular risk assessments to ensure that the children can play freely and safely in the areas identified for play. Children take part in evacuation drills and staff record these appropriately.

Children benefit from an excellent and wide range of resources, which promote all areas of their development. They self select from items during free play time from low level shelving or ask staff for specific items, for example the balance beams or the puppet theatre. Staff access these for the children but ensure that the children help. Children play an active part in keeping the room safe, for example, when taking part in tidy up time. The overall layout of the playroom allows the children freedom to play safely. However, they cannot easily access the book boxes because of the low level seating in front of them.

Staff are very well deployed in all areas ensuring the children are protected and safe at all times. All staff have a good working knowledge of child protection, which further ensures the children's welfare. All the required procedures and documents are in place to ensure the children's safety and welfare.

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

The provision is good.

The children enter the preschool confidently and settle well to activities. The staff set out the room with resources so that the children can have ready access to activities when they arrive. Children then independently select the toys they wish to use, directing their own play. Staff allow them to play without constant supervision, but are on hand to support if needed. The children naturally include adults in their play and invite them to join in, for example making breakfast for them in the home corner.

The children are making friends and have good relationships with staff. The children greet each other and enjoy each other's company. They consult with each other about activities and cooperate well together, for example when laying out the train track and playing in the sand. They help each other to get out resources and to do up aprons.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children are interested and motivated to learn. The children are becoming independent. However, they are not given opportunities to take responsibility for their own work, such as putting in labelled trays, bags or folders. Staff put the work away and then sort it into individual piles giving these to the children as they leave.

At group times, they sit and listen well. They initiate conversations and talk confidently with others. They use language well to communicate their thoughts and feelings and are keen to use new words such as 'croissants' when discussing bread. They listen to well told stories and join in with repetition and prediction eagerly in 'The Little Red Hen.' They are learning about different letters and sounds through

activities, such as the letter of the week. Staff link sounds with words and encourage the children to do so using familiar words and the children's own names. The children have limited opportunities to see their names in print on a daily basis as staff miss opportunities to encourage this in everyday situations, for example at snack and circle time. The children enjoy mark making using different tools such as painting, chalkboards, white boards and colouring with crayons and felt pens. However, they make little use of the independent writing table unless taking part in an adult supported activity, such as making books.

The children count confidently for instance when taking part in rhymes and songs, adding and subtracting with the staff. They use a good range of mathematical language appropriately in their play. They are beginning to explore mathematical concepts such as bigger and smaller when comparing conkers; same as and more than when threading the pasta shapes. The children have opportunities to engage in physical activities, which they enjoy such as using balancing beams, riding bikes and jumping on the trampoline.

The children show a lot of interest in the topic. They look at the autumn display, touch the items and investigate the different objects, such as the wheat, flour, bread, leaves and conkers. Through discussion with the staff they are aware of the sequence of growing wheat to make flour and are knowledgeable about what flour can be used to make. Children have opportunities to be creative everyday. They confidently paint, draw and make collages. They use a wide range of different materials and media such as paint, dough, clay sand and water. They create their own works of art on white boards and at the painting easels. They know the different colours well and are confident when describing their pictures. They play imaginatively, for example when using small world play, the home corner and the puppet theatre. They use the computer confidently and ask questions about the changes that take place within the programmes.

The staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the early learning goals and use the foundation stage guidance to plan an interesting and varied curriculum for the children. The planning covers all areas of learning and staff use evaluations to see if the objectives are met. The staff monitor the children's learning through observations, which they transfer to individual development records. The staff observe the children in both individual and group situations and use these to help with future planning. The record keeping system is under review.

The staff praise and encourage the children in their efforts and achievements, so boosting their self-esteem and confidence. The staff ensure that they are on level with the children either by sitting at the tables or on the floor so that they can join in with work and play and hold conversations with the children. They extend the children's knowledge and understanding by effective use of open-ended questions. They encourage the children to take part in the different activities but do not insist if a child chooses not to.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the pre-school. The children's individual needs are known by all the staff, which ensures that they receive appropriate support. The children have a sense of belonging and are happy and settled. Children understand responsible behaviour and most children behave well. They know right from wrong, discuss sharing, and turn taking. They have opportunities to negotiate for themselves and if staff become involved, they give clear explanations as to why behaviour is not acceptable. Children receive praise and encouragement from staff, for their efforts and achievements, which boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence. Some younger children become disruptive during group times and staff do not always deal with this consistently.

Children learn about themselves and the wider world through both planned and spontaneous discussions. They are becoming aware of different aspects of society. They see positive images from other lifestyles in books, topics and projects. They use the varied resources which promote equality and diversity, such as in the dolls house, small world play, and in the home corner where they have different cooking, eating utensils and 'food' such as a wok, Chinese bowls and pizzas. Boys and girls have equal access to resources and children of both sexes playing alongside each other very happily for example in the home corner, the sand and with the train track, pasta threading and dough. They understand about moving onto school, where some have siblings. Older children, who are due to start at the primary school on site, benefit from a visit from the reception teacher in the term before they start at school.

The pre-school fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff and parents work closely together to ensure children settle well into the preschool environment. They verbally exchange information at the beginning and end of the sessions to ensure they meet the needs of the children and parents. Parents receive a comprehensive prospectus, in which there is excellent information about the preschool. It contains clear, detailed information about nursery education and sets out the early learning goals.

Staff greet parents and children on arrival and chat with them. Children's individual progress and achievements are shared with parents through regular meetings with key workers and parents evenings.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the good organisation of the pre-school. Staff work extremely well together as a team and are flexible within their work to undertake roles not necessarily assigned to them. The committee are supportive and have robust procedures in place for the recruitment, checking of staff and ongoing appraisals.

Strengths and weaknesses of practice are accurately identified and the staff and committee take action to develop or negate these, for example, the preschool is looking for ways to extend the outdoor provision to further enhance the children's

care and educational experiences

Children benefit from an experienced, established and caring staff team. The staff demonstrate very good knowledge of the early learning goals and child development, so enabling the children's individual needs to be met. All the staff have a commitment to ongoing training to ensure that they keep up to date with current practice.

Detailed and comprehensive policies and procedures underpin the good quality of the provision, and demonstrate the competence of the staff and committee. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last inspection, there were four recommendations made. With regard to the care, the preschool were asked to remove rubbish from the side of the building and to update the child protection contacts.

The nursery education report recommendations concerned developing planning and the use of assessments of the children to feed planning. Key workers identify children's individual needs and these are included in future plans.

All the recommendations have been put into place.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted 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.

## **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):

- review snack time to ensure that children have healthy options and to enable children to pour own drinks
- review the layout of the book area to ensure that children have easy access to the books

### **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):

- evaluate the daily routine to ensure that children have more opportunities to recognise their names in print, on a daily basis
- extend the children's independence by allowing them to take responsibility for looking after their own work

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