



St. Matthews Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY282247
Inspection date	14 October 2005
Inspector	Maxine Rose
Setting Address	St. Matthews Church, Vaughan Road, London, E15 4AA
Telephone number	0208 503 0014
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Registered person	Newham Pre-school Learning Alliance
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Matthews Pre School opened in 1982 and operates from a hall in St Matthews Church. The playgroup is situated in a residential area off the Romford Road in Newham. A maximum of 34 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 45 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 9

children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with children who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are effective measures in place to raise children's awareness of good health and also to reduce the spread of cross infection. Each day the children are learning to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene by washing their hands before meal times and after using the lavatory. Children also help to maintain a clean environment by taking part in routine tasks such as clearing plates and wiping tables.

The children receive useful information about maintaining healthy lifestyles through eating a balanced diet. At meal times the children make healthy food choices from a selection of fresh sandwiches, milk, water, juice, fruit and vegetables. Children are further informed about healthy living through a good selection of reading material and themed displays that promote the value of foods and teeth care. The children enjoy the benefits of an outdoor play area and the many physical challenges this presents for them. They make good use of the space and climbing apparatus to develop their skills in balancing, walking, running, crawling, squatting, rolling, stretching, jumping, pulling and sliding. They are energised by being out in the fresh air and develop a sense of well being as they strengthen their bodies and develop their physical skills. In an emergency situation, the children are helped to make a full recovery as most staff are suitably trained in first aid.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are received into an environment that is vibrant in colour and practical in design. Children's work is displayed in interesting ways and the layout of the premises help to ensure effective supervision of children. Indoors the children move safely around the setting to undertake a range of worthwhile activities. This is made possible by the good organisation of furniture and resources. The children select well maintained resources such as books, construction sets and creative materials from tables and shelves that are positioned at low levels to enable easy access for them. The staff have sound knowledge and understanding of ways to ensure children's safety. Children are made aware of areas that are not safe to play by secure boundaries, such as stair gates and socket covers. Other safety measures include risk assessments, smoke alarms and spring loaded doors to safeguard children's welfare. Children are further safeguarded from harm by the groups child protection procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and secure in the setting and in their relationships with the staff. They receive good opportunities for one to one care and learning from the staff. This helps to build their confidence. The staff have a sound understanding of the 'Birth to Three Matters' framework and promote children's independence in positive ways. Children actively take part in a 'self service' style snack table whereby they make sandwiches, pour their own drinks and clean their own plates. They are learning to share and take turns with resources such as the computer and enjoy a variety of creative activities like model making, which they proudly display. Staff are attentive and give praise and encouragement to the children, who feel valued and gain a sense of belonging.

Nursery Education

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children are making sound progress because they are well supported by the staff team's positive attitude and secure knowledge of almost all areas of the Foundation Stage. Plans are clearly presented and provide detailed coverage of most areas of learning. At times Children's achievements are not always sufficiently linked to the stepping stones. This results in some missed opportunities for learning. The staff observe and record the children's progress but this is not always clearly linked to plans for the next stage of learning. The staff know the children well and plan activities that provide useful challenges for them in most areas of learning. The staff provide good opportunities for children to receive one to one learning. This helps them meet the needs of all children including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language.

The children readily engage in the interesting programme of planned activities. They persevere with problem solving tasks such as puzzles and enjoy the new experience of preparing snacks. The children feel at ease to talk about their families during one to one discussions. They are gaining knowledge and understanding of the wider world. They are also developing a positive image of themselves and the wider community, through: books, self portraits, dressing up clothes and themed topics on culture. The staff make some good provision for developing children's creative and imaginative ideas. The children have fun when exploring colour, making dough, cutting and sticking, however, there is less time in the programme for children to sing and dance.

Staff place good emphasis on developing children's skills for reading and writing. All children are learning to recognise their name and familiar words by selecting name cards at registration and noting well presented labels on familiar objects. Four year olds are becoming skilful writers. They take pleasure in writing short stories whilst making good use of upper and lower case letters. Three year olds have good opportunities to practice writing, using a range of tools for mark making for instance, paint brushes, pencils and using their fingers in the sand.

All children enjoy listening to stories and demonstrate clear understanding of narrative form as they retell the story from the beginning to end. At times story sessions are not managed effectively to ensure all children listen attentively. Four year olds speak clearly when communicating their needs, for example, when initiating games and during snack time. Younger children develop confidence when speaking

in familiar groups. Children access a range of resources that feature numbers and encourage them to count with purpose such as a computer, peg board games and daily calendar charts. Occasionally, the children count when drawing objects and staff use appropriate language such as 'how many' to develop children's understanding. The emphasis on recognising, counting and using numbers in a variety of ways is limited as children are not always questioned effectively to enhance learning.

The children are observing seasonal changes and learn to record their findings on a weather chart. They use resources, books and visit places in the locality to help them identify familiar features for instance the 'hospital' theme in the home corner. They are challenged and excited by the new skills they acquire when operating the computer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children relate well with one another and towards the staff. The staff plan activities well to enable the children to work independently or in groups. The children are learning to work together harmoniously as they share and take turns with resources. The staff know the children well and are pro-active in ensuring all children have an equal chance to take part in activities. The group have clear procedures for how children with special educational needs can be fully integrated in the setting and there are good opportunities for children to develop their communication skills. This is done through one to one learning with staff, listening to stories and learning new words. This also helps to ensure all children settle well, feel respected and form good friendships. The partnership with parents is good. The parents are kept informed about the setting and their children's progress in practical ways. There is also good opportunities for parents to exchange information with the staff about children's progress. This helps to establish a stable care and learning environment for the children, whilst fostering their spiritual, moral, social and cultural appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provider has a comprehensive understanding of the National Standards for day care. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced in childcare. They organise the space and resources in the setting effectively to ensure all children have easy access to the full range of activities. The staff maintain good systems for sharing information with parents about their children's individual needs. Procedures are clearly presented and records relating to children's care and wellbeing are maintained in a confidential manner. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children who attend.

The provider demonstrates a positive commitment to developing the quality of educational provision to children. The team comprise of long serving staff who work purposefully together to monitor and assess children's progress. At times, children's assessments lack detail and the information obtained is not always used effectively to

plan for the next stage of learning. Leadership and management is satisfactory. The group are involved in local initiatives such as the 'Kite Mark Modular Scheme' and make good use of training opportunities to identify areas for improvement and to build on their knowledge of the Foundation Stage of Learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group have made some progress in addressing the key issues from the last inspection. Children have more opportunities to construct and build models from a variety of materials including those which are recyclable. They develop new skills such as moulding, sticking and cutting as they transform natural and man-made products into works of art. The group have made less progress in implementing strategies for managing group story time this results in children not always being able to listen attentively.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are 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.

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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 further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Introduce strategies for improving children's concentration and behaviour at story time.

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):

- Ensure staff monitor and evaluate what they have learnt from children's assessments and use this information effectively to inform plans for the next stage of learning - consider whether learning should be extended or modified.

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