

# Saint Jerome's Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY418056
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynne Naylor
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Jeromes RC Primary School, Greenloons Drive, LIVERPOOL, L37 2LX
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<b>Registered person</b>	Saint Jerome's Pre School Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	

## 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 Jerome's Pre-School Playgroup opened in 2002 and operates from a small building situated within the grounds of St Jerome's primary school, in Formby. Children are cared for in one room. Children have access to an outdoor area at the rear of the building. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. The group is open five days a week, term time only, from 09.15 until 15.15. There are currently 70 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 36 receive funding for nursery education. The group supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a number who speak English as an additional language. The service employs eight staff who work part time and all hold an appropriate early years qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children are protected in the event of sickness or accidental injury because all staff hold an up to date first aid certificate. Accident records are well maintained and a useful running log is kept monitoring the frequency of accidents. Useful medication record forms are completed, however, they are only signed once by parents so it is not clear whether this is to give consent or to acknowledge they have been informed of the administration.

There are areas in this multi-use building which are dusty, however, staff keep the toys, equipment and toilets clean. They routinely disinfect the kitchen surfaces before preparing snack and use anti-bacterial spray on the tables prior to children dining. Such practices allow children to play in a clean environment, without risk to their health. Children talk knowledgeably about simple health issues, such as washing hands to remove germs. Children are developing a growing ability to be independent and an awareness of their own physical needs with even young children independently washing their hands, when dirty. Older children access the toilet independently and are discreetly monitored by staff.

Children enjoy healthy snacks, for example, toast and seasonal fruit, such as apple, banana, grapes or segments of orange, with a choice of milk, water or juice to drink. Special dietary requirements and children's preferences are known and met well, using the good information gathered from parents in relation to children's allergies, likes, dislikes and any other dietary requirements. Children who attend full-time bring a packed lunch, which is safely and hygienically stored in a refrigerator. At snack time, children sit at disinfected tables and use plates, which reduce the risk of cross contamination and contribute to keeping children healthy. They develop good social skills as they chat freely to each other whilst eating.

Children effectively learn about nutrition as staff talk to them about the benefits of eating healthy foods. Children taste other foods, such as Indian food and Chinese food as part of themed activities. A small water jug is kept accessible during the session, which enables children to have a drink when they are thirsty. Children's independence in self-care is well promoted. They are supported well to take off and put back on their coats and are also helped to fasten dressing up clothes.

Children's health benefits from breathing fresh air and vigorous exercise outdoors. Children control wheeled toys along the pathway, stopping and starting to avoid collision and are supported well to pedal the bicycle with stabilisers. They develop climbing and balancing skills through using the slide. Children's fine motor skills are fostered well as they competently use a wide range of materials and tools, for example, scissors, glue spreaders and paint brushes, during creative activities. Children regularly manipulate dough well using their hands and a range of implements.

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

The provision is good.

Children play, eat and rest in an environment that is well set out in distinct play areas making it visually welcoming and stimulating. The group only has a couple of permanent display areas in this multi-use building so staff just put up a sample of each activity. This means some children's work is not displayed to promote a sense of belonging in the group. Resources are

checked for safety by staff and set out in defined areas. The available equipment supports children well in many aspects of their learning as they help themselves to additional equipment from drawer units. It is in the creative area that children have less access to materials. For example, although children paint at the easel whenever they wish their choice of paper size and colour and their choice of brushes and colours of paint are limited.

Children play in secure premises where doors are kept secured and visitors must ring the bell for access, which helps to protect children's safety. Staff closely monitor access to the provision and the registration system shows which staff and children are present. Daily visual risk assessments are carried out, checklists completed and clear policies and procedures concerning safety are followed. Children learn to take responsibility for their own and others' safety, such as walking, not running and caring for toys. Children are very familiar with the setting's emergency evacuation procedures with fire drills carried out on a regular basis. Children benefit from high levels of staff supervision and close monitoring of their activities. Photographs and planning documents demonstrate that children learn about safety, the emergency services and people who help us through a variety of activities and discussions. Every year, a police officer visits with his dune buggy to talk about safety issues.

Children are protected by the staff's good knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and the implementation of appropriate procedures. Having attended workshops on child protection, staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and keep emergency telephone numbers for social services readily available.

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

The provision is good.

Children enter the group happily and confidently. They play well together and eagerly take part in planned activities, taking pride in their results. Children enjoy good opportunities to initiate and extend their own activities and consolidate their learning in most areas. They are familiar with different resources, such as paint, crayons and glue, however, the narrow range of available materials, at any one time, in the creative areas hinders their ability to be imaginative and freely creative. Therefore, many activities result in similar end products.

Appropriate emphasis is given to developing children's social skills and independence. They are confident and happy in their secure relationships with staff. The staff are friendly, approachable and develop very close relationships with the children because the ratios of staff to children are high. They work and play in an environment that sets, explains and maintains clear and consistent limits. Consequently, children develop personal values, such as honesty, fairness and respect. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well as they share news, sing and listen to a range of stories.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff's good knowledge of the 'Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage' has a positive impact on improving children's achievements, as they plan according to the different areas. The varied range of activities on offer and the well-timed, appropriate input from staff during activities helps children make good progress.

Useful assessment systems are in place; children's good progress through the stepping stones is recorded and systems are being developed to identify the next steps in children's learning. Children listen with enjoyment to stories, responding to what they have heard with relevant

comments and questions. The book area is comfortable and prominent displays of books relating to the theme result in children choosing books for pleasure and to locate information. Children speak fluently and clearly as a result of staff's consistent interest and enjoyment in their play and conversations. They spontaneously sing simple songs, such as nursery rhymes, whilst playing.

The provision of accessible pencils and papers enables children to use and develop their growing literacy skills in imaginative play, for example, when using the role play area, which is set up as an optician shop. Children are introduced to some print that carries meaning, for example, environmental print displayed in the book area. However, full use is not yet made of all areas to show children a range of print. Although there are accessible pencils and notebooks, opportunities for children to practise early mark making are not exploited. For example, sometimes children write their own names on their work whilst at other times they do not. Children are not always encouraged to attempt writing for a purpose, for example, a list is completed by an adult rather than a child when recording who has had a turn at the computer.

Children show a healthy interest in numbers and counting. Many older children count beyond 10 and appropriately use mathematical language, such as big and little. They join with staff to count each other at registration. Whilst playing a board game, children count the spots on the die, and collect the corresponding number of spikes to place in their hedgehog. Children have a good awareness of shape. They complete jigsaws and recognise and name flat shapes whilst playing. However, their understanding of numbers through practical activities is not exploited, which limits the development of problem solving skills.

Children have a good sense of time. They show a clear awareness of the routine as they help set up the pictorial timetable, twice a day. They differentiate between past and present and talk about past and future events in their own lives, for example, what they watched on the television at home and where they are going on holiday. Children demonstrate their understanding of technology and develop good mouse control at the computer as they operate simple programs. Children use small world equipment well to express their thoughts and feelings. They play imaginatively with the dolls' houses and in the role play areas, indoors and outdoors.

Children's awareness of their own culture and those of others is increased as they sing Grace before snack time, listen to the Deacon talk about Noah's Ark and enjoy activities, such as making cards, completing Chinese writing and receiving lucky envelopes at Chinese New Year. Children look closely at changes, such as in the weather and seasons. They are keen to dress the 'weather bear' in appropriate clothes for the weather.

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

The provision is good.

Children, parents, carers and visitors are made to feel very welcome at the setting. Staff ensure that the atmosphere is happy and relaxed at all times. As a result, children enjoy very good relationships with staff, finding them approachable and very responsive to their needs.

Children know and understand the rules, which are consistent. They learn to effectively negotiate with each other and take responsibility for their behaviour. Staff prompt good manners, giving children meaningful praise for their achievements, which helps boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. Children sit and listen whilst others speak at news time and snack time. Staff are particularly skilled at promoting positive behaviour. This is because they are very aware of individual children's needs, respect children's decisions about whether or not to join an activity

and provide sensitive support, consequently, children behave well. Children with learning difficulties are well supported. Children enjoy a warm relationship with staff that are enthusiastic and committed.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's awareness of diversity and disability is raised through activities, role play, stories and visits from interesting people. Staff provide resources and many interesting activities that positively represent the children who attend as well as individuals from the local and wider community. Planned activities that raise children's awareness of the wider world involve learning to respect the cultures and beliefs of others by sampling foods from other countries. Good use of stories and activities effectively raise children's awareness of disability. Children also learn about the jobs of others in their local community, through interesting visitors, from the police force, the National Trust and the Church.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are clearly invited to approach staff at any time about their children. Parents receive regular newsletters, which inform them about the provision, and eagerly fund raise to buy extra equipment to support the group. Photographs are taken of the children at play and these are also displayed for parents to view. Each child has their own folder to store examples of their work and these are shared regularly. Parents are pleased with their child's eagerness to attend.

Parents of children who receive nursery education are aware of the routines and activities. The progress being made by individual children is conveyed to parents verbally on a regular basis and in written form at the end of each term. The written records are informative in relation to children's progress, however, not well linked to the stepping stones to inform parents well about the Foundation Stage of learning. Parents contribute to the formal assessment records and any information they provide about their child is formally used to promote children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The well established staff team are good role models and work very well together to provide a harmonious learning environment. They have a good awareness of the National Standards, which aids their ability to monitor that they are meeting them. Staff assume their respective roles well, consequently, children are well cared for in the setting. They respond quickly and appropriately to the needs of all children supporting younger and less able children very well. All staff demonstrate strong skills and provide a comfortable, relaxed environment in which children play and are eager to learn. Effective deployment of staff enables children's care and learning needs to be met.

The required documentation, which serves to protect children, is in place and stored confidentially. The operational plan is readily shared with parents and used to effectively manage the setting. Policies are regularly reviewed, however, some policies have not been amended to reflect the change of opening hours from sessions to full days. Children benefit from the strong commitment shown by the managers and staff to developing the service. Staff make effective use of guidance, support and relevant training. However, timetables have not been effectively adjusted since the change of provided hours to full time. Whilst part-time children are coming in and going home the remaining children sit on the mat and wait. The wide range of activities are cleared away and everything stops, consequently, learning is significantly disrupted.

Overall, the leadership and management of the setting is good. Children play and learn in a comfortable and relaxed environment. One of the strengths of this setting is staff's dedication to providing a stimulating environment, to achieve this they tirelessly get out and put away equipment each day in this multi-use building. They have very little time due to their timetabled use of the building, however, much logistical planning takes place to ensure the room is attractive and inviting when children arrive. Useful newly implemented planning and assessment systems are developing well and monitored to ensure that children are provided with a varied activity programme, which builds well on their known knowledge and skills.

Children are given sufficient time to explore their own ideas and have a true choice of whether to play indoors or outdoors. This contributes to children's good progress in all areas of learning and the smooth operation of the setting as a whole. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

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

This is the first nursery education inspection. At the last care inspection, the setting agreed to provide children with opportunities to further develop their independence during daily routines; and to revise the behaviour management policy to include information as suggested in the Guidance to the National Standards for Sessional Day Care.

Since the last inspection, the setting has increased the opening hours and now follow the National Standards for Full Day Care. The written statement on behaviour management has been reviewed and includes appropriate information on bullying. Good progress has been made to promote children's independence. Children make decisions about whether to play indoors or outdoors and staff deploy themselves accordingly. A small table with cups and jugs of water have been placed in the room so children help themselves, when thirsty. The bathroom door is now left open which enables children to visit the toilet without having to ask. Drawer units have been purchased for the storage of toys, which enables children to help themselves to additional equipment.

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 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 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):

- ensure the medicine policy is clear and that parents give written permission to administer any medication and sign the record book to acknowledge the entry
- ensure the operational plan and all policies accurately reflect the practice following the increase in opening hours from sessions to full days.

### **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):

- provide children with opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and emergent writing skills in practical activities and provide sufficient resources for children to explore their own ideas in creative activities
- organise the day and timetable of activities to ensure the learning needs of children who attend all day continue to be met whilst other children are arriving and departing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)