



St Edmunds Catholic Pre-School and Sunshine Club

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY287923
Inspection date	07 February 2006
Inspector	Julie Ann Birkett
Setting Address	21 Westgate Street, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1QG
Telephone number	01284 752700
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Registered person	St Edmunds Catholic Pre School And Sunshine Club
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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. Edmunds Catholic Pre-school and Sunshine Club originally opened in 1984 and moved to the current location in 2004. It operates from a purpose-built building. It is situated in the centre of Bury St. Edmunds. A maximum of 26 children may attend the scheme at any one time. The scheme is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 49 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 128 children aged from 2 to under 8 years on roll, of these 35 children are in receipt of nursery funding. Children come from both the local and wider catchment area. The setting currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs.

The scheme employs 13 staff. There are 7 staff, including the manager who hold appropriate qualifications. There are 3 staff who are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where appropriate hygiene practices are maintained by staff. Children learn about hygiene and personal care through daily routines, such as, putting their hands over their mouths when they cough and wiping their noses. Children are reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet through the posters in the bathroom.

Children have their dietary needs met because the staff request information from parents and carers on the children's dietary requirements and any allergies. There is a policy for healthy eating which is shared with parents and carers. Menus are displayed for parents and carers to see. The pre-school children have healthy eating options at snack time, such as, breadsticks and fruit. The older children can select their tea from a range of food available. All children eat well and enjoy their meal times together, sitting and chatting with their friends and staff. Staff do not regularly use these daily opportunities to promote children's understanding of healthy eating through conversation, for example, encouraging the children's awareness of the benefits of white to brown bread and milk and water to soft drinks.

Children participate in a range of indoor and outdoor activities which contribute to their physical development and healthy lifestyle. For example, children develop their large motor skills and co-ordination as they run and climb in the playground and play ball and hoops games. They can crawl through a jungle made in a tent in the garden or stretch out in the quiet book area. However, children are not learning effectively about the importance of daily exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle because staff do not use regular opportunities to remind them.

Children's health is promoted because the staff are well informed about the children's health care matters and all necessary consents are in place to support this. Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because there are appropriate procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection and over half the staff are first aid trained.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, safe and secure environment. Security

measures are robust and implemented well. For example, security cameras monitor the entrance and all visitors are challenged and have to sign in and wear badges. There are rigorous systems in place to ensure school children are escorted to and from their schools safely. Children's safety is promoted through the vigilance of the committee and management team who carry out regular risk assessments of the premises. Staff make daily checks of the premises and double check with each other that the appropriate tasks have been done to ensure the children's safety. Children benefit from a broad range of well maintained and good quality equipment both indoors and out.

Children's awareness of everyday safety is reinforced effectively when they are reminded to walk inside and to be careful down the steps to the playground. Children understand that things have to be picked up off the floor to prevent tripping and that spilt water has to be mopped up to prevent them slipping on it. Children use the large climbing equipment on the safety bark. This enables children to try new things, practise and extend their skills in safety and under the watchful eye of staff. Children are beginning to learn about safety in the home when they play with the toy fire station and make visits to the fire station. The older children take responsibility for others' safety. For example, they help the younger ones move the giant tower building away from where it might hurt someone if it fell.

Children are very well supervised by staff who ensure that most of the daily preparation is done outside of hours. This enables staff to be actively involved with the children at all times which contributes to the children's safety. Staff implement the appropriate safety procedures and documentation is well maintained to ensure the children's safety is promoted. Children are protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection procedures and give top priority to children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly to the range of play equipment already attractively set up for them when they arrive. They eagerly participate in a variety of both planned and spontaneous activities which are overall appropriate to their developmental needs. Children enjoy their busy day in the relaxed atmosphere of both the pre-school and out of school clubs. Children choose prepared activities or initiate their own play with friends. The opportunity to decide for themselves encourages children to be self motivated. Children select independently from the good range of resources available to them. They are confident to access things themselves from storage boxes to support their own ideas and needs.

Staff have a good understanding of when children need space to play without adult support and when they need it. Children's perseverance and pleasure of a completed task is encouraged through staff's good interaction and support. Children ask lots of questions and benefit from the patience and knowledge of the staff. Children practise and refine skills in favourite games and learn new ones in activities such as making papier-mâché. Children evidently enjoy their time both at the pre-school and out of

school clubs and are heard to comment loudly "that's cool" and "that was fun".

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables children to make good progress. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan a broad range of activities and experiences to promote the children's development. Staff make regular observations of the children to ensure they have a good understanding of what the children can do. Staff meet regularly to discuss planning for the children's next steps. More experienced staff are able to use both planned and spontaneous opportunities to support and challenge the less and more able children. For example, a member of staff asked a child if she could photocopy the child's wipe-board picture before it was cleaned away. The explanation of how the photocopier worked was age appropriate and helped the child see how technology could provide a permanent image of the picture she had drawn. Not all staff have this level of experience and skills. The less experienced staff are briefed as to what the learning outcomes of activities are so that they can encourage the children's learning. However, the short term activity plans do not show how children's different levels of ability will be met to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers can support or challenge the children fully.

Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is good and as a result all areas of the children's learning is enhanced. Children have keen attitudes to learning; they are curious and want to explore resources and activities. They are able to negotiate with friends verbally and therefore, all work and play together well and in good humour. The calm atmosphere created by staff and children working in harmony fosters a good learning environment for all children. Children show care and concern for others when they think about someone they love and make a letter for them to go on the prayer tree.

Children are confident and articulate speakers. They express their ideas and thoughts as they play imaginatively. Children's language skills are promoted through conversation with staff. Children enjoy listening to and participating in stories and rhymes. Children learn that factual information can be found in books when they look at the jungle animals before they draw them. Children see lots of words and letters around them in the environment which stimulates their interest. Children learn to recognise their names when they register themselves at circle and snack time. They have many daily opportunities to practise their writing skills with some of the more able children writing their own names.

Children's mathematical development is promoted well through a range of daily spontaneous and well planned activities. Children readily count and use their fingers to represent number. They benefit from games and activities to help them recognise numerals. For example, a three-year-old recognises numerals on the computer keyboard when typing in their imaginary telephone number. A four-year-old calculates that there are not enough spoons for the three bowls and says "no, that's one, we need two more". Children learn concepts such as weight, height and volume in practical ways, for example, when they fill buckets of sand, use scales and build towers.

Children explore a range of natural and man-made materials. For example, they investigate the tray of shells and stones and see if pom-poms float or sink in the water. They comment on their observations when they notice the pom-poms are heavy when they are full of water. Children design and build with a range of materials and use tools effectively to mark, cut and join. They are developing a good understanding of technology when they use calculators, metal detectors and the computer. Children develop a sense of time when they talk about the weather and their birthdays. They begin to develop an understanding of their local community when they visit the school or local shops. Children celebrate a variety of world and traditional festivals and cultural events to develop their understanding of the wider world. All the children share in Benjamin Bear's travels around the world when he goes on holiday with families and returns with stories of what he has seen.

Children's physical development is well promoted. They benefit greatly from access to an undercover outdoor area for all year round physical play. Their larger physical skills are further challenged by being able to use the good range of equipment in the school playground. Children's finer motor skills are developed through mark-making and the use of tools for dough, model making and toys with small parts such as puzzles.

Children have good opportunities for creative development. They paint, draw and make models. They have free access to all the creative materials in the craft area which enables them to be independent in their own designs. Children enjoy role play and small world play. They demonstrate good imaginations as they act out real and make believe events. They have opportunities for singing and music making.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a very child centred environment where they feel valued by the adults who care for them. The premises are bright and attractive and provide a stimulating but comfortable place where children enjoy their time learning through play or just relaxing after a busy day at school. The rooms are predominately geared to meet the needs of the pre-school children who have the larger use of it. The out of school children freely use the pre-school equipment or their own age appropriate games and resources. However, the older children make a limited contribution to the out of school club and how it is organised. As a result the older children's sense of belonging and involvement is not fully promoted.

All children are warmly welcomed by enthusiastic staff. The children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted by seeing their own work on the walls and being able to take an active part in the daily routines. For example, children help to tidy up and take part in story time sessions. Children's independence is fostered when they are encouraged to do up their own coats, pour their own drinks and choose their own activities.

Children's behaviour is very good and they are polite and helpful. Children have a clear understanding of the boundaries of behaviour and are developing a sound understanding of right and wrong. Staff manage children's behaviour well and give

clear, age appropriate explanations to help the children develop self-control. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement from the staff. Children feel valued because staff take the time to listen to them and notice the good things they have done.

Staff get to know all the children well. Children develop an understanding of their own and the wider society through planned topics and everyday opportunities. For example, the pre-school children benefit from good links with the primary school and begin to see what infant school life is like. They have access to resources, toys, books and puzzles that reflect positive images of gender, culture and ethnicity. There are appropriate systems in place to care for children with special needs.

The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. An initial profile of the child is drawn up between staff and pre-school parents and carers. Staff are very welcoming to parents and carers. There is good information available on the notice boards. There are some opportunities for pre-school parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning. For example, raising their awareness of learning topics through newsletters and on the notice boards. However, pre-school parents and carers are not actively encouraged to share and contribute to the children's records of achievement.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are protected because all the staff checks have been undertaken to ensure that adults working with the children are suitable to do so. The manager has been active in ensuring the system for any future checking of staff is effective in response to the recent changes in legislation. Over half the staff have childcare qualifications and all staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ongoing professional development. They attend regular workshops and short courses to acquire new skills and knowledge. The staff are very active in putting new ideas into practice. For example, encouraging the children to use metal detectors shortly after attending a 'gadgets and gizmos' workshop. Staff are open and willing to trying new things to enhance the children's learning experience.

All the children benefit from the excellent staff to child ratios. The children receive a lot of one to one attention which promotes good relationships and effective learning. The high level of staffing also promotes a calm environment in which children can be heard and are, subsequently, calm themselves. Organisation of time and space promotes the children's development. The majority of the session enables children to have free play and to choose from a selection of activities and experiences that staff plan to promote children's enjoyment and learning. Children benefit from the undercover outdoor area because this provides additional space for a wider range of activities and play. Children also work in small and large groups throughout the session on more adult-led focussed activities.

Paperwork and documentation is in very good order and promotes the children's

welfare. The written policies clearly state the objectives of the procedure in relation to the outcomes for the children. This helps all staff and volunteers to be clear as to why they are carrying out these procedures. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated, if necessary, to ensure that they are still meaningful in working practice.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The committee and staff are supportive of each other and share the same aims and objectives for the children. The management team work well together. They have assessed the setting strengths and weaknesses and have identified areas for improvement. Staff are working towards the devised plan of action to address the issues. Regular staff meetings are held. All staff work seamlessly together and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Subsequently sessions run smoothly and children have the optimum time to enjoy their play and learning.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of nursery education the setting was asked to improve whole group times to meet the needs of both the younger and older children. Good progress has been made. The group have introduced a snack bar system so that children can choose when they have their snack and who to sit with. They sit in small groups with a member of staff. This arrangement fosters a social snack time where children can chat to their friends and staff. Children's independence is also promoted because they can pour their own drinks and select their own snack. The small group size enables the member of staff to interact with individual children at their individual level of understanding.

The second point for consideration raised at the last inspection was to develop opportunities for children to use their imagination in art and design. Good progress has also been made addressing this issue. The group has created a craft area where children can access a large range of craft materials independently. Children can express their imagination through designing and making pictures, collages and models freely without adult-led ideas and restrictions.

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):

- develop children's awareness of the importance of healthy living further through more frequent use of everyday opportunities
- develop systems to encourage the out of school children to make a greater contribution to the organisation of the club to promote their sense of belonging and involvement

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):

- improve the curriculum planning further to show how less and more able children will be supported and challenged to ensure that all staff, students and volunteers maximise the children's learning opportunities
- develop systems to share children's observation and assessment records with parents and carers to enable parents and carers to have a greater contribution to their child's learning within the setting.

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