



St Saviours Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123588
Inspection date	30 January 2006
Inspector	Jane Mount
Setting Address	St Saviours Church Hall, Sandpit Lane, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4DF
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Registered person	St Saviours Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Saviour's pre-school is a privately run group which opened in 1999 and is situated in central St Albans. It operates from St Saviour's Church Hall, Sandpit Lane and children have access to a large, spacious hall, an adjoining smaller room and toilets. There is a kitchen and storage facilities available. Children also benefit from an outside play area.

A maximum of 40 children may attend and there are currently 44 children aged from

2 years 6 months to under 5 years on roll and of these 28 receive funding for nursery education. Children can attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports a small number of children who have special needs or who have English as an additional language.

The group is open on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 and a lunch club runs on Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:00 until 12:45.

St Saviour's pre-school is run by joint owners. One is an Early Years teacher and the other has an NVQ level 3 in Early Years Care and Education qualification. There are four part time and four full time staff who work with the children. Over half the staff team have an early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a healthy diet and are given a range of nutritious foods at snack time such as carrots and cucumber. Snack time is used as a time for sharing and social interaction and children enjoy sitting in small groups with their keyworker and talking about the colour and texture of the vegetables they are eating. Children who attend the lunch club are also encouraged to talk about nutritious foods and what is good for them to eat. Children's dietary needs are met well with effective recording procedures in place so all staff are aware of any special dietary requirements children may have. Children have regular opportunities to learn about healthy eating through discussion and play. They enjoy cutting out pictures of food to make their favourite healthy meals and sticking them on paper plates to take home. Staff encourage the children to talk about the foods they have chosen and the effects the food will have on their bodies. For example, making them grow stronger and taller.

Children's health is promoted and cross infection minimised as staff follow clear health and hygiene policies and procedures. For example, tables are cleaned using anti-bacterial spray before snack time and lunch club and a clear and informative sickness policy is shared with parents including guidelines on infectious illnesses. Effective support and guidance from staff helps children to gain a clear understanding of good hygiene practices. For example, children are encouraged to wipe their noses and dispose of tissues appropriately and are able to confidently demonstrate how they must cover their mouths when they cough to stop germs spreading. Children are beginning to understand why they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet and are praised by staff for doing so. However, there are no procedures in place to ensure all children wash their hands prior to snack time.

Children are able to take part in a range of activities which contributes to their physical health. They develop self confidence in their physical skills as they use a wide range of indoor equipment and activities on a daily basis. They keenly participate in energetic and imaginative music and movement sessions and are able

to skip, march, walk on tip toe and gallop with great confidence. Children's physical skills are extended by staff who challenge and support them, such as when jumping from one block to the next or practising throwing and catching balls. Children show expertise as they ride their bikes skilfully around obstacles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Any potential risks are identified and addressed through risk assessments and staff have a sound knowledge of health and safety procedures. Appropriate safety precautions are in place such as safety gates, socket covers and regular fire practises. There are effective security systems in place and supervising entry to the pre-school is well managed with the outer door locked, a door buzzer, glass viewing panels and signing in for all visitors. This ensures no unauthorised persons enter and that children are not at risk.

Children can independently access a varied range of resources and activities. Toys and equipment are developmentally appropriate and sufficiently challenging so children are interested and motivated in their play. Resources are well maintained and regularly checked to ensure they are safe. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe. Staff explain safe practices, such as why a child should pick up a dropped toy so another child does not trip and hurt himself. In music and movement children are reminded when walking backwards to be aware of what is behind them so they don't bump into something and hurt themselves. Older children are able to confidently explain how to hold scissors safely and remind others how to do so also.

Children are safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures and they give priority to children's safety and welfare. All staff undergo a sound vetting and recruitment process to ascertain their suitability to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children feel at ease in their environment. They separate from their parents and carers and settle happily at the beginning of the day. Children enthusiastically explore their environment and investigate the range of resources which staff attractively set out each morning. The daily routine has a balance of adult led and child initiated play and children experience a varied range of experiences and activities which contributes to their overall development. The 'Birth to three matters' framework has recently been introduced to plan and organise activities for young children. Staff are becoming familiar with the framework and are implementing it well with children benefiting from a good range of age appropriate experiences.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging as their work is valued by staff and children. For example, at large group time a child proudly showed a duplo model he

had made of a stable to the rest of the group. Time was given for him to explain how it was made and children were able to ask him questions about it. Children show an interest in books and can be seen regularly sitting in the book corner. They independently look for their favourite story and confidently ask an adult to read it. They listen attentively to the story and discuss the pictures, pointing to different animals when asked. Children's communication skills are well fostered as staff listen and respond to children's questions while looking at the pictures in the book.

Children's independence is encouraged as children are able to move around freely and make independent choices about their chosen activity. They enjoy helping to put toys away when the tidy up music is played and are familiar with where resources are stored.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage which ensures that children participate in activities that enable them to make progress in all areas of learning. Children are motivated and making good progress towards the early learning goals with resources organised to allow children to make choices and gain independence. Children are encouraged to persist in tasks with appropriate support given and staff are skilled at asking open ended questions that encourage children to think. Staff build trusting relationships with the children. They talk about safety and behaviour within routines and children's behaviour is managed in a calm manner which helps promote their self-esteem.

Keyworkers observe and assess their key children and this information is used to inform future planning. Children's assessment records have recently been reviewed and clearly show children's next steps of learning as they now relate to the stepping stones. Plans link to the early learning goals and stepping stones. Short term plans show clear learning intentions and are generally evaluated but do not show how activities can be adapted to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs.

Children arrive happy, quickly settle and engage in activities with their friends. They are aware of boundaries and behavioural expectations, for example sharing and taking turns. Children show independence skills through being able to confidently access all areas of the environment, for example, going to the toilet on their own or choosing resources to play with. Children are regularly praised by staff and children eagerly participate in activities and are excited to learn, for example, when talking about the dentist the children were absorbed and motivated. Children have regular opportunities to experience music, imaginative play and explore varied materials and media on a daily basis. Children access sticking, cutting and drawing and delight in dressing up as a doctor or patient in the home corner which has been converted into a doctors surgery in line with the current theme of 'people who help us'. Some children are able to count confidently to 10. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through books, singing and counting during the daily routine, for example, they count the children sitting at the table for drinks. When discussing shapes they visited a local church and investigated the shapes that could be found within the building. They explore concepts such as quantity and volume through sand and water play.

Children speak clearly and are able to concentrate well until the end of a book. They enjoy stories and understand that print carries meaning. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters, for example, at large group time some children are confidently able to recognise the letter 'A' and then discuss items beginning with this letter. Children experience writing for a purpose during their play and enjoy writing 'prescriptions' in the doctors surgery. Children are able to access writing materials and enjoy writing letters or drawing pictures, putting them in envelopes and posting them in the pre-school letter box. Children are becoming familiar with the written word on labelled toy boxes and beginning to recognise their names on their coat pegs and name cards. Children's physical skills are fostered. Children are able to negotiate around other children and equipment as they run and ride their bikes in the large hall. Children demonstrate they can balance and show good co-ordination as they kick, throw and catch balls of various sizes. Children have access to resources that develop their knowledge of technology. They are able to use a CD player for listening to story tapes and use calculators, telephones and keyboards within their play. Children learn about past and present through talking about their families and people they know.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is promoted through the range of resources and activities they take part in and through discussion. For example, a child brought in a Chinese dragon to show as he had visited London to celebrate Chinese New Year the previous day. Time was spent talking about the celebration and because they had discussed the festival the previous week children were familiar with the topic and showed confidence talking about it. Children were actively involved and interested and wanted to hear more about the fireworks and the big dragon dancing. Children develop positive attitudes towards others as they are able to select from the available resources reflecting diversity. Displays and posters throughout the pre-school reflect positive images and help children to become aware of the wider society. Children with English as an additional language are well supported and the setting has effective systems in place to care for children with special needs.

Children understand responsible behaviour and are beginning to learn right from wrong. They are encouraged to show care and concern and to behave considerately towards others. For example, when a child was upset, another child fetched a favourite toy for him to play with. This was acknowledged by a member of staff who thanked the child for being kind. Children play well together and behaviour is dealt with in ways appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Staff give explanations, encourage children to apologise and set clear boundaries. Children are taught to be polite to others and the staff are good role models. Children can be regularly heard saying 'please' and 'thank-you'. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the close relationships that staff have developed with parents and carers. Children's individual

needs are met as staff obtain information about their background and interests from their home information sheet that parents complete prior to their child starting at the setting. An 'Induction day' is also held for new parents and children and this has been found to be an effective way of exchanging information. Parents are welcomed into the setting and have the opportunity to become a parent helper. They are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning through newsletters and requests for items from home for the current theme. Information about topics and themes are displayed on the parents noticeboard. Children make progress towards the early learning goals because parents receive detailed information about the Foundation stage and the six areas of learning. At inspection parents praised the pre-school and felt the environment was inviting and stimulating. They spoke positively of staff who they reported were caring and approachable and they felt fully informed of the progress their child was making.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a setting which is well organised. The staff work well together as a team and are supportive of each other. High staff ratios and effective staff deployment ensures children receive good levels of support while still encouraging their independence skills. Thorough systems are in place for recruiting, vetting and inducting staff so that children are cared for by staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. All required documentation including policies and procedures for the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are in place. Staff are well informed of the policies and procedures within the setting and they are able to implement them effectively.

The leadership and management of the group is good. The two leaders work well together and their skills compliment each other. They have a clear vision of the needs of the children and the pre-school and are positive role models. Staff are supported through regular staff meetings and information from staff meetings is used to monitor and evaluate the quality of care and education provided within the setting. All staff attend relevant training courses and are currently in process of implementing 'Birth to three matters' framework into their planning and practice.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to ensure there is a system of accurately recording children and staff attendance, to ensure adequate fire detection equipment is available, to review hand washing procedures at the painting easel and to ensure parents are aware of Ofsted's contact details. Children's safety and welfare are now safeguarded as there are accurate recording systems for children and staff attendance and fire detection equipment has been reviewed and enhanced. Hand washing procedures have been changed at the painting easel and Ofsted's contact details are now available for parents on the noticeboard and in the parents brochure.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to include clear learning intentions in their planning that links to stepping stones and to gain information from parents about their child. Children's care and learning are promoted as learning intentions are now included on planning sheets and parents complete a 'Home Information sheet' and are invited to an Induction day.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints.

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):

- review hand washing procedures to ensure all children wash their hands before snack 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):

- develop existing planning systems to show how activities can be adapted to suit children who learn at different rates or who have particular needs.

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