



## **St Oswald's Pre-School**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	314174
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 January 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Ann Doubleday / Josephine Ann Northend
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Oswalds Park, Wren Close, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 4BG
<b>Telephone number</b>	07974 704213
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<b>Registered person</b>	Great Aycliffe Town Council
<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.Oswald's Pre-School is one of a number of pre-school groups run by Great Aycliffe Town Council. It has been running for over 20 years and operates from a single storey building, in a public park, on the outskirts of Newton Aycliffe town centre. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 during school term time.

There are currently 23 children, aged 3 to under 5 years, on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend regular morning sessions.

Five members of staff work with the children. All have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Local Authority. The pre-school has achieved quality assurance through the Quality Matters programme.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is supported well, with opportunities to have well planned outdoor physical exercise each day. Children move with increasing control; for example, as they ride their scooters and tricycles around obstacles. They know how exercise affects their bodies. For example, they know their hearts beat faster and are tired after action games. Children can rest and be active according to their individual needs.

Children learn the importance of good hygiene through daily routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands regularly before snacks, after playing outside and after using the toilet and know why they need to do so. However, plates are not always used at snack time and food is eaten directly from the table. This means that good hygiene practices are not always fully promoted.

Systems are in place for addressing children's health needs. For example, all staff hold a relevant first aid qualification, and appropriate documentation is used for the recording of accidents and medication. The effective use of a sick children's policy enables the children's health needs to be well met.

Drinking water is readily available throughout the session. Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet through the promotion of nutritious snacks including fresh fruit. They choose when to have their snack and have opportunities to pour their own drinks. This promotes their independence well. Staff are aware of and meet children's individual dietary needs.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment where risks are identified and minimised. This means they are able to move around safely, freely and independently. There is a clear health and safety statement in place and most staff have attended health and safety training. They give priority to helping children understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are taught to use equipment, such as, chop sticks and scissors safely.

There is a very good range of developmentally appropriate resources, which are well

organised in child height furniture to encourage independent access. The security of the premises is good and there are clear lost and uncollected child policies in place. The high adult-to-child ratios ensure children are well supervised and they remain safe.

Staff have attended child protection training. They have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities and procedures are in place in the event of an allegation against staff. This means the welfare of children is protected.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the setting. They arrive happy and eager to participate and are making good progress. Close and caring relationships with staff increase the children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children are developing good relationships with each other and their communication skills are well supported through good adult-to-child interactions.

Activities and play opportunities are purposeful and developmentally appropriate, resulting in children being motivated and interested. This is evident in the good planning and evaluation of activities. Children are very aware of the daily routines in place. For example, they put on their coats ready to play outside, without being reminded. They move around the rooms freely, selecting their own activities and are offered clear choices by staff, such as, when or if they wish to have a snack.

There are clear settling in procedures in place for children, which include gaining information from parents about their child's routines and care. Staff are sensitive to and meet children's individual needs well. Children generally behave well and are developing a sense of right and wrong. They respond well to staff who clearly explain why they should not do something.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy their time at the group and achieve well, because staff use their good knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide high quality nursery education. Staff have attended Foundation Stage training. They plan and prepare well an interesting programme of activities across the six areas of learning and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the delivery of focused activities. Assessment systems are in place and link clearly to the Foundation Stage curriculum, but are not dated to show when children are progressing. Parents contribute to their child's initial assessment through the completion of a 'getting to know me' book. The planning clearly differentiates between older and younger children to ensure appropriate challenge. There is an effective key worker system in place and children are grouped well. The good use of resources and the clearly defined activity areas support the learning opportunities offered to the children. Staff use good questioning skills to further extend children's thoughts and ideas.

Children are developing good communication skills. They show emerging confidence

in speaking to others and hold a conversation for extended periods of time. They talk freely about their own experiences and feelings, particularly at circle time. Children are developing a good sense of time, as they remember what they did yesterday, describe features of the weather and know the day of the week and the month of the year. They are beginning to develop their writing skills, holding pencils correctly as they make good use of the mark making area. Most children form recognisable marks and letters and they have many opportunities to recognise their own names. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to become aware of the sounds in words or to recognise which letter represents some of the sounds. Children have good access to books and handle them well, turning the pages correctly. They listen well to stories and can predict what is going to happen next, recalling events from familiar stories.

Children use a computer well. They control the mouse and complete simple programs confidently. They also know how to load a program and have access to programmable toys. They are developing good understanding of number; they count beyond ten and recognise many numerals. Children match a number of objects to the correct numeral. They recognise and name shapes confidently and are using size language well. Children have good opportunities to use problem solving and calculating in every day routines and activities.

Children are beginning to develop a sense of space and they extend their large physical skills through a variety of well planned outdoor experiences each day. Children develop good levels of hand-eye co-ordination; for example, through the use of different sized pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and spreaders. They cut well with scissors.

The children are confident in their play and learning and are proud of their achievements. They are generally well-behaved and are beginning to show care and concern for others. Children show good interest in their environment and the world around them. They explore well using a variety of materials, such as, soil, ice, sand, water, magnifying glasses and magnets. They are developing a strong understanding of other cultures and beliefs through the use of interesting resources, visitors to the setting and well planned activities. Children are developing good self-care skills. For example, they pour their own drinks, put on their own coats and wipe their own nose, disposing of their tissues appropriately. Children are developing a secure knowledge of health and bodily awareness. They understand why they need to wash their hands before eating. Staff help them to understand the need to warm up before exercise and children know the effects of exercise on their bodies.

Children explore different colours; they know and name them, and differentiate between light and dark colours. They access and use well a good range of resources in the creative area. Children use their imagination well in play. For example, they explore the Chinese culture within the role play areas. They construct with a purpose in mind and build three-dimensional structures confidently using a variety of materials independently. Children join in and enjoy familiar songs, and use musical instruments freely and rhythmically throughout the session.

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

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed and staff ensure resources are readily available. Planned activities are undertaken that positively represent the local and wider community. For example, children have a very good understanding of the Chinese culture and this is evident in their imaginative play. A good range of resources is available reflecting other cultures and races. This helps increase children's awareness of diversity and develop a positive attitude to others. The staff's understanding of each child's needs is used well to encourage a sense of security and belonging. For example, staff wipe children's spectacles after they have been playing outside, to ensure they are free from condensation and they can see properly. There is a clear special needs statement in place and there are identified special needs co-ordinators who have received relevant training. There are systems in place to ensure all children are included in activities.

Children are generally well-behaved and polite in response to the expectations of staff. They take turns and are beginning to show care and concern for others. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased through the good example set and gentle reminders they receive from staff. This fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the two-way sharing of information. Parents receive regular newsletters, a brochure containing information about the Foundation Stage, and further information is displayed around the setting for their attention. They are involved in the initial assessments of their child, but do not receive regular formal feedback on their child's developmental progress, such as, open days or written reports. Parents are encouraged to continue their child's learning at home; for example, through the use of the pre-school book lending system.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children, which contributes to them being happy and settled. Children move around confidently and independently. They initiate their own play and learning well as they move freely between the activity areas.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good and promotes the children's learning. All of the staff have early years qualifications. The management undertakes regular appraisals with staff and promotes their attendance at relevant training. The knowledge gained by staff is used to further support children's care and welfare. All staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn. Consequently, children's progress towards the early learning goals is good.

There is a key worker system in place and children are grouped well to ensure their

needs are effectively met. Adult-to-child ratios are met effectively and staff work well together as a team. All staff are appropriately vetted and there are clear staff recruitment and induction procedures in place.

Required documents are well organised and readily available. The detailed policies and procedures in place are shared well with staff to appropriately promote the welfare, care and learning of the children. However, the complaints procedures are not fully developed in line with recent changes to the guidance. There are effective systems in place for the sharing of information with parents about the service and their child's activities. The provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

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

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to: improve hand washing provision; ensure safety renewal arrangements are up-to-date and improve staff's professional development. Children's health has improved, as they now have access to warm water for hand washing in the toilet area. Children's safety has improved, as fire equipment is now checked monthly by the staff and regularly by external agencies. Staff now have annual appraisals with management and induction procedures have been established. This enhances the care given to children.

There were four key issues identified at the last education inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of practice has improved. A new planning system has been introduced, which includes focused activities, detailing differentiation for individual children. Staff are aware of children's progress and plan appropriately for the next stage in their learning. Good progress has been made in extending activities for the more able children.

Staff now use spontaneous activities to reinforce mathematical ideas in many areas. The book corner has been extended and is now used well. Daily opportunities are offered to children in order to explore their senses. They now have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their body and why they need to wash their hands. This is supported well by staff.

### **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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the
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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):

- further develop the complaints procedure in line with new guidance

#### **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 children have opportunities to become aware of sounds in words and begin to recognise which letters represent some of the sounds
- improve systems to ensure parents receive regular formal feedback on their child's progress towards the early learning goals.

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