



Auntie Steph's

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY270041
Inspection date	27 February 2006
Inspector	Jannet Mary Richards
Setting Address	Sparcs, Vicarage Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 0WA
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Registered person	Stephanie Jane Scoular
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?

Auntie Steph's playgroup opened in September 2003. It operates from new premises, comprising of one large and one smaller hall, separate bathrooms for boys and girls and disabled facilities. A small kitchen, office and large storage facilities are also used. The main hall may be partitioned to create two separate areas, allowing for two groups of children, within the maximum numbers. The premises are situated close to two primary schools, in the Swinton area of Salford. The playgroup serves the local

community.

The playgroup is open from 08.45 to 11.15 every day, term time only. There are currently 42 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll, 15 of whom receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children with English as an additional language. There are no children currently attending who have identified special needs.

The playgroup employs nine staff in addition to the manager. Over half of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Others are working towards suitable qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children benefit from being encouraged to eat healthy foods. A very good range of healthy snacks such as sliced fresh fruit and vegetables are offered at each session, along with drinks of water and milk. Snack time is a social occasion which the children enjoy. They are just beginning to develop independence skills by helping to clear away after their snack. The staff have identified this as a development for the future, in order to further promote children's self-help skills.

Children's health is promoted well. The children benefit from being cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. The staff follow clear and effective procedures for keeping play areas and equipment clean, though the procedures for children to clean their hands and the cleaning of tables before snack time, is not yet rigorous enough to prevent the spread of infection.

The children learn about the importance of staying healthy when they discuss why exercise is good for you and learn about the effect it has on their bodies.

They enjoy a very wide range of physical play opportunities in the large hall each day, which helps to develop their large motor skills. The children crawl through tunnels, for example, balance on beams, roll hoops and pedal wheeled toys around the hall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The children are cared for in a child-centred environment which is exceptionally well organised to meet their care and learning needs. Staff arrive and prepare thoroughly before each session begins, transforming the large sports hall into a stimulating play area for the children. They use mobile display boards to display children's work, pictures and items of interest. Posters are put up around each area of learning and then taken down at the end of the session. A wide range of good quality toys and

resources are made available in mobile storage units to ensure that children have many choices about what they do. This excellent organisation of space ensures that children are made to feel welcome in the environment and are ready for play as they arrive each day.

Children are cared for in a safe environment with effective measures in place to keep them safe. The staff give high priority to children's safety and ensure that they are very well supervised at all times.

The staff have a thorough understanding of child protection procedures in order to safeguard the welfare of any children they may care for.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy attending the playgroup.

They settle very well when they start at playgroup because the settling in procedures are flexible enough to accommodate their individual needs.

The relationships between staff and children are good. The staff interact with the children well, playing and talking to them, asking questions as they play and having fun together. The range of activities provided for the children under 3 years are planned by staff who use the Birth to three matters framework to guide their practice. This means that the children benefit from interesting play opportunities, which promote different aspects of their development well. For example, they enjoy playing with puppets, listening to stories and singing often, which helps them to become skilful communicators. They have fun climbing through tunnels and dressing up, helping them to become strong and confident children. They benefit from being able to use their senses when they explore materials such as sand, paint and water, which allows them to develop their creativity and helps them to become competent learners.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The children are developing a positive approach to learning because they can access a good range of resources which allows them to initiate their own play experiences. The children move around the play areas freely, selecting resources confidently and initiating their own play and learning experiences.

The children develop an enjoyment of books in the well resourced book area where they look at books independently or listen to the stories read by adults. They often use props, such as puppets to add to their enjoyment and they can also use books for reference in other areas, such as the construction area. The children learn that we write for a purpose as they have many and varied opportunities to practice early writing skills. They write shopping lists in the role play shop, for example, or take their name cards from a board to copy when they label their own work.

The children often count as they play and recognise some numbers on the clock in the role play area, or on the numbered skittles, for example. They understand simple concepts, such as full and empty when playing in the water tray and have many good opportunities to observe and learn about shape, space and measure. They do not always use their knowledge to develop their skills further as the staff sometimes miss opportunities to question them and encourage their problem solving skills.

Children are provided with some interesting opportunities to learn about the world around them, when they go for walks in the grounds, visit the school, study creatures, such as maggots and handle the pet animals which are brought into the playgroup occasionally. They use their design and making skills to build models from boxes and construction toys.

The children are very imaginative and make the most of the good opportunities for role play in the vegetable shop, for example. They are very creative and enjoy freely exploring the good range of media and materials in the workshop area.

Their large motor skills develop well through access to a good range of play opportunities provided each day, in addition to drama and gymnastics sessions. They develop fine motor skills very well when they use tools such as pencils and scissors.

The staff know the children very well indeed and because of this they are able to support and challenge the children at an appropriate level as they play, to ensure that they make good progress in all areas of their learning and development. The written information relating to play, planning and assessment of the children's progress, however, does not clearly show the progress children make along the stepping stones and the intended learning outcomes of the different activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's needs are well met because the staff treat each child as an individual, discuss children's needs thoroughly with parents and carers and respond to individual needs. There are appropriate systems in place to support children with special needs.

The children behave well in the very positive environment created by the staff, which fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They enjoy the praise and encouragement they receive frequently from the staff.

They have many opportunities to learn about different people in the world around them as they play with a good selection of resources reflecting race, culture, gender and disability. They often participate in celebrations of different cultural festivals, strengthening their awareness of diversity.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are made to feel very welcome and they often get involved in day to day activities through a parent rota system. Very good quality written information in the

form of a welcome booklet, policy booklet, informative notice board, flip chart, which is changed daily, along with regular discussion, ensures that parents are very well informed about what their children do and how they are cared for. This good partnership contributes well to children's learning and well-being.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care and learning is effectively promoted through the good organisation of the setting. The manager works alongside the staff providing them with effective support day-to-day. The staff team communicate very well and are clear about their roles and responsibilities, ensuring effective teamwork so that the sessions run smoothly. Children benefit because the staff follow the policies and procedures well in practice, ensuring a consistent approach. Most documentation is stored safely, although some information about children is on open display.

The play environment is exceptionally well organised to promote children's play and learning. The staff arrive early and spend time preparing the play areas each day to ensure that they are ready for children when they arrive.

The leadership and management of the nursery education are good.

The staff attend training on a regular basis to promote their professional development and implement what they have learned effectively into the child care practice to benefit the children. There is a strong commitment by all staff to the continuous development of the provision.

Overall the needs of all children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection one recommendation was made in relation to development of the planning. Since the inspection the staff have tried different methods of planning and assessment and now have systems which are effective, although require further clarity, as recommended in this report.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been two complaints since the last inspection;

In November 2004 Ofsted was notified by the provider about concerns relating to a member of staff. An investigation was carried out and appropriate action was taken by the provider who remains qualified for registration.

In March 2005 a concern was received in relation to National Standard 2 - Organisation. A visit was made by a child care inspector to investigate the concern. The provider was found to be complying with the National Standards and remains

qualified for registration.

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):

- review the arrangements for drink and snack time to continue to develop children's independence and further minimise the risk of infection spreading
- ensure that information relating to individual children is treated as confidential.

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):

- continue to develop planning and assessment documents to give more clarity about children's progress along the stepping stones and planning the next steps in their progress
- increase the opportunities for children to use their mathematical knowledge for simple problem solving during play and routines.

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