



## St Mary's Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY217236  
**Inspection date** 06 February 2006  
**Inspector** Lindsey Wright

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**Registered person** Playgroup Committee of St.Marys PCC  
**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](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 satisfactory. 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 Mary's Pre School opened in 2002. It operates from one large hall in St Mary's Church Centre in central Watford. The pre-school serves the local area.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00 term time only. There is no provision for outside play available.

There are currently 43 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group is run by a committee made up of church members and staff. The pre-school employ 5 staff members, of these, 3 staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is 1 staff member working towards an early years qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment. They are learning personal care as they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack. Children observe staff cleaning the tables before and after snack and lay table cloths. This encourages their knowledge of appropriate hygiene practice. There is a policy relating to sickness and communicable diseases. This informs parents of expectations to minimise the risks of cross infection. Most staff have current first aid certificates and first aid resources are at hand, this supports children's overall safety.

Children enjoy healthy snacks and benefit from these. They are offered a variety of fruits which children are able to identify. Children have a choice of milk or water to drink at snack time. Drinking water is available at all times which encourages their independence skills. Children very much enjoy snack time as a social occasion and to recall events. Staff are on hand to reinforce and encourage children's concepts of numbers, children correctly count how many pieces of apple there are. All medical and dietary needs are discussed with parents and met where necessary.

Children are keen to participate in a range of physical activities which take place indoors. They confidently climb the ladder on the climbing frame and balance on beams. Children skilfully manoeuvre around on tricycles and scooters and are able to control and stop their vehicles appropriately. At times children enjoy listening to music and moving their bodies in rhythm to the music. Children enjoy visits to the local shops and community periodically.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a generally safe environment. Safety measures are in place such as socket covers, smoke alarms and stair gates to further ensure children's safety. Children benefit from high staff ratios, which in turn ensures good levels of support and supervision, and therefore promotes personal safety. Children independently access a broad range of safe, good quality resources that are age-appropriate, and clean and in good repair. Staff maintain some daily risk assessments to highlight and monitor safety issues because visitors can gain access to the building. However, the

informal health and safety daily assessments mean sometimes risks could possibly be missed, therefore children's safety is jeopardised.

Children's safety is maintained through the observant staff team. Children are reminded by staff of unsafe behaviour. They know they must not run indoors and to ride tricycles safely. Staff supervise children well, for example, when children use a knife during snack time. They learn how to cross the road safely as they walk to the shops. Children are reminded not to speak to strangers. This means children are learning to keep themselves safe and use equipment safely.

Children's welfare is protected as a child protection policy is in place and staff are aware of procedures to take if necessary. All staff have updated their knowledge and understanding in child protection issues. This ensures children's safety and welfare is prioritised.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the pre-school. They are confident to access their environment and approach adults for support and interaction. Children are able to request further activities such as art and craft that have not been offered, these wishes are met. Children's self esteem is raised through their work being displayed. They receive praise and recognition for their efforts as they print pictures using various small toys. Children play purposefully in their role-play scenario's, as they make cups of tea for staff and feed the baby. Children sit and listen well at circle time. They eagerly recall the story of the Gingerbread Man. They buy gingerbread men from the local shop to support their story. Children behave well and respond positively to staff requests. They play harmoniously together. Children benefit from the curriculum provided for the funded children as they are involved in all aspects of this. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is currently not implemented in the daily routine, therefore planning for the younger children's play and development is not fully explored.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn, therefore children are making steady progress. The setting continues to develop the implementation of the Foundation Stage. They are making progress in curriculum planning and are beginning to be skilled at linking activities to each area of learning. Observations of children's abilities take place. Progress records are completed and are generally used to inform future planning. Therefore, children's progress can be monitored to identify any gaps in their learning. Children respond well to staff who generally ask open ended questions to gauge their understanding. Staff plan a broad range of appropriate activities that interest children and promotes aspects of their development. Staff allow children time to recall events as activities are repeated during the week, therefore their learning is consolidated. Staff would benefit from further knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and how to implement the early learning goals through the daily routine.

Children arrive happy, they immediately engage within activities and seek peers and adults for company. They sit and concentrate during their chosen activity with adult support at hand. Children independently access their environment and do so confidently which is promoted by staff. Children are able to communicate and are happy to discuss their home life or suggest a song they might like to sing. They handle books appropriately and have good opportunities to draw and paint. Children can see the written word displayed in their environment and identify their name card. However, the organisation of story time is not effective in engaging all the children's interests, many children are distracted at this time.

Children confidently sing number songs, they take a card to recognise how many smelly socks are left so are beginning to learn the concept of addition and subtraction. Older children count people and objects well. They confidently count fruit at snack time. Children use mathematical language such as big. Some children can match shapes and follow a pattern sequence. There are some opportunities for children to develop an understanding of weight and measure.

Children are finding out about the environment, through themes and visits to the local community. They have some access to a range of programmable toys which support their play. Children play imaginatively in the home corner, making staff cups of tea. They participate in creative activities, such as printing using stickle bricks and car wheels. Children enjoy music and movement sessions developing rhythm by following instructions and using their bodies. Children are able to use their imagination through play.

Children are developing good physical skills, they ride tricycles and learn to climb and balance using further resources. They walk to the local neighbourhood and visit the church garden. They competently use scissors and writing utensils with a purpose.

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

The provision is good.

Children and parents are greeted warmly into the provision. Staff collate information regarding children's individual needs as well as likes and dislikes. This helps to ensure a smooth settling in process. Parents are encouraged to support the current topic. Children have a sense of belonging within the provision through displays of their work and photographs, which help to inform parents of the activities they pursue whilst at pre-school. They are able to share resources within the home corner and work co-operatively to build models with construction materials. They behave well. Children know the rules and respond positively to staff requests. They are encouraged to be kind and share within the group, and are becoming aware of their own needs and the needs of others. Children sit attentively for their names to be called during circle time and wait patiently at snack time. They help staff to clear away the activities. At present a complaints log is not maintained, therefore parents are not aware of the process if they need to make a complaint.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children who have special needs are monitored by a co-ordinator, who liaises with the parents and outside agencies accordingly. Children play with resources which reflect positive

images of diversity and other cultures. Children are made aware of festivals from around the world through acknowledgement and discussion.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the secure relationships which have been developed with parents. They express positive comments with the care and education their children receive. Parents gain good quality information about the provision and educational programme offered. They feel included in their children's education through participation in topics, receiving regular newsletters, attending open mornings and parent consultations.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a committed team of staff, who show a keen interest in developing their knowledge and skills through training opportunities. The manager uses effective recruitment procedures which ensure staff are suitably checked and either hold appropriate qualifications or are working towards achieving these. Children benefit from high staff ratios which positively support children's care, learning and play. The play environment is arranged to promote safety and for children to access activities independently. Children have opportunities to learn independence skills. The areas of learning are covered well on a daily basis. Staff induction takes place informally, however the key elements are not completed routinely for new staff. Therefore, there is not a secure process to ensure that new staff know all the relevant information, this poses a possible risk to the safeguarding of children.

There is a set of detailed policies as part of the operational plan. All staff have a copy of these and parents have access to them at the pre-school. These provide information for parents about the daily running and ethos of the group.

The quality of the Leadership and Management of the nursery education is good. This is a well established provision. They have a sound knowledge of child care and the Foundation Stage. The manager has a clear vision of the running of the pre-school. Staff work well as a team, and displayed rotas and plans enable staff to know their activity roles each week. The leader and staff are committed to improving practice, and any identified issues are dealt with promptly. Annual appraisals for staff encourage and motivate them to attend training which is given high regard. The staff's good teaching practices and successes are shared and implemented by other staff. Evaluation and monitoring takes place by looking at the progress records of children. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The previous care inspection recommended that daily records of attendance shows times of arrivals and departures of children, and that names of visitors are recorded. Staff record children's attendance and any late arrivals or children who are collected early. This ensures effective monitoring of all children and adults entering and leaving the building. A visitors book is maintained.

Staff were asked to develop staff induction to ensure all staff are fully aware of policies and procedures and that staff progression is monitored. An induction procedure is in place, however health and safety and child protection issues are not consistently delivered to new staff in their first week of working. Staff progression is monitored through the appraisal system, a training log is maintained and staff meet regularly.

Staff were requested to develop their awareness of child protection issues and procedures. This has been addressed as all staff have attended child protection courses, this positively supports the safeguarding of children.

Staff were asked to develop their knowledge and understanding of special needs issues and legislation and work towards being pro-active. The leader of the pre-school is the named SENCO and has a sound understanding of the procedures to be followed if there are any concerns about a child. She attends regular SENCO meetings and effectively supports children in her care.

Staff were requested to provide opportunities for parents to receive regular information on their children's progress. This has been addressed as parents are informed through regular verbal updates, a notice board is available with information, open mornings take place periodically and parent consultation meetings are programmed twice a year. Parents also receive regular newsletters. This has a positive impact on children's experiences within the nursery.

The previous nursery education inspection recommended the setting to develop planning to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered and are given equal emphasis. Staff have looked at the planning and ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered. They evaluate activities and use record sheets to check each child's progress.

Staff were requested to plan the environment to ensure that resources are always available that enable children to make progress in all areas of learning. The environment is arranged for children to freely access further resources other than those set out. They are clearly labelled for children to see the written word. A maths and mark making area is provided each session. The 6 areas of learning are promoted on a daily and weekly basis so children can make progress.

### **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 to 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 satisfactory. 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):

- conduct a risk assessment regarding the premises in particular the main door, collection point of children and visitors to the premises
- provide a written complaints log
- develop a suitable range of activities for the younger children by using the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- provide staff with induction training which includes health and safety and child protection policies and procedures in their first week of employment.

### **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 organisation of story time to make this more effective for the children.

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