



St John's Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Full day 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 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 John's Pre-school has been established since 1970 but changed ownership in 2003. It is a privately run provision and operates from the former football pavilion on the same site as the leisure centre in Pocklington. Children are cared for in an open plan playroom with designated areas that provide for different learning opportunities. A separate self contained area is provided within this for babies. A maximum of 41 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each

week day from 08.00 until 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children aged from 11 months to four-years-old on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff. Of these, six hold or are working towards appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept healthy because they are cared for in an environment where staff follow effective procedures and practices in their daily routines. For example, they clean the tables thoroughly before and after the children eat, ensure that the toilet areas are kept clean throughout the day and have an effective cleaning rota for toys and equipment. They wear disposable gloves when changing nappies and ensure they wash their hands afterwards. Accidents are managed well. There is a high level of qualified first aiders who take prompt and appropriate action when accidents occur. The pre-school has a policy for the care of sick children but this is not shared effectively with the parents. This means they are not fully informed of when their child should not attend or the procedure staff will follow if their child becomes ill whilst at the pre-school. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines. The older ones know, for example, that they need to wash their hands before eating and after toileting and readily do so at all times.

Parents are asked to provide all food for their child including a snack and a packed lunch for those children who stay over the lunch time period. Staff ensure babies are fed according to their individual routines and the older children sit together to eat. Meal times are pleasant social occasions when the children demonstrate good manners and social skills. Drinking water is made readily available in all areas. For example, the younger children have their individual cups easily accessible and the older children are able to help themselves to water from a jug as and when they become thirsty. This is also thoughtfully taken into the outdoor area.

High priority is given to fostering the children's physical development. All children have daily access to the outdoor area, which includes a separate area for the under twos. In addition there is a covered area to enable the children to enjoy fresh air and a range of activities in all weathers. Staff effectively help the youngest children to develop their skills as they encourage them to use equipment, such as balls, push along toys and the sand pit. Both the three and four-year-old children demonstrate good physical skills. They move around confidently and with control and learn to move well in a variety of ways. For example, they carefully negotiate a pathway as

they run and chase each other and show good control as they use the climbing frame and slides. They are able to throw balls through hoops accurately and they enjoy using wheeled toys when they demonstrate they can stop safely. All children are able to rest according to their needs. For example, staff follow the youngest children's sleep patterns as discussed with their parents and the older ones are able to sit quietly as and when they want both indoors and outside. They have a good understanding of the effect that exercise has on their bodies. For example, they know to help themselves to a drink when they become hot and thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. The open plan play room is well organised and adorned with colourful displays and interest tables, which include examples of the children's work. This shows their efforts are valued and appreciated and provides them with a rich and stimulating learning environment. Staff carefully monitor all callers to the nursery and there are effective entry systems to ensure the children are well protected.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised effectively in most areas. Staff use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. For example, they carry out daily checks on all areas, follow good practices in most of their daily routines and have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits. However, they are not always vigilant in sweeping up the sand in the outdoor area to prevent falls and there are several areas in the garden where nettles are allowed to grow. Whilst this encourages wildlife, such as butterflies to visit the garden, staff have not adequately assessed the risk that the nettles also pose to the children's safety.

Staff are effective in raising the children's awareness of keeping themselves safe. They skilfully explain safe practices to them. For example, they explain why they need to use furniture, such as chairs correctly and why they need to help tidy the toys away after use to prevent trips and falls. They encourage them to learn about road safety as they use associated equipment in the outdoor area and when they go for walks. They ensure the children practise the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis so they know what to do in the event of a fire. They also effectively reinforce the importance of fire safety as they invite the local fire fighters to talk to the children and by taking the children to visit the fire station so they can view the various equipment.

Children use a very good range of well maintained toys and resources both indoors and outside. These are appropriate to their age and stage of development and are well organised in child-height furniture to encourage independent access. Resources are used well by the staff to support the children's play and learning. For example, they make good use of the role play area to provide the children with interesting learning opportunities, such as what life would have been like in a castle many years ago. The children also take great pride in helping to make their own resources, which they use alongside manufactured toys. For example, they add small world figures to

the castle they have made from boxes to act out various situations and they help to compile books about various activities they have been involved in.

Children are protected by staff who have an appropriate understanding of the nursery's policies and procedures in regard to protecting children from possible abuse. They demonstrate an understanding of the possible indicators of abuse, and are aware of their responsibilities and know how to access information regarding the procedure to be followed if they have concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children in all age groups are confident and display good self-esteem. They arrive very happy and eager to participate and those who are new to the nursery or a little unsure are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Babies and children under two-years-old make good progress because they develop strong bonds with key members of staff and benefit from routines which are consistent with their experiences at home. Staff use their developing knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to plan a range of activities. These include opportunities for the children to learn about the textures of different materials as they play with objects in the treasure basket, dough and sand. The children respond to the colours and sounds of a range of manufactured toys with delight and have very good support to develop their early communication skills as the staff enthusiastically respond to their sounds during play.

Children between the ages of two and three-years-old are confident in their relationships with the staff. They play happily together and with adults as they delight in using resources, such as duplo, the train set and outdoor equipment, such as wheeled toys and the climbing frame. They join in enthusiastically with the activities of the older children and staff adapt these very well to ensure they meet the learning needs of this age group. They are offered a varied range of experiences, which enables them to make sense of the world and express their ideas. For example, they thoroughly enjoy making marks using brushes and water in the outdoor area. They learn to follow the daily routines, such as sitting down together for snack and they enthusiastically join in with musical activities, such as singing, stories and rhymes. They benefit greatly from the family environment as they mix with the older children and follow their example.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and offer a good balance of adult and child-led activities, which allows the children to learn at their own pace and make good progress towards the early learning goals. The activities are well planned and presented, cover all areas of the curriculum and provide the children with interesting and often unusual learning opportunities. For example, the recent topic on castles captured the children's imagination extremely well. Staff have excellent relationships with the children and use questioning very successfully to challenge their thinking and language skills. They support the less able children well during focused activities

and provide challenge for the more able ones. Systems are in place to record the children's progress and development but these are not always kept up to date.

Both the three and four-year-olds are highly involved in the activities offered. They are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. For example, they become fully immersed as they make shields and crowns and build castles as part of the current topic. They concentrate very well and are well motivated to complete tasks, whether adult led or independently selected. Children have very good relationships with both staff and their peers, and they know each other very well. They listen very attentively to stories and are confident to predict what might happen next. They demonstrate very good language skills as they correctly identify different features of a castle, such as the moat, turrets and draw bridge. They all recognise their own name as they identify their coat peg and access their name card during writing activities. The more able children confidently write their own name on their work and make good attempts to copy words that staff write in their work books. Their behaviour is very good and they demonstrate a good understanding of the codes for working within the group. For example, they know why they need to help at tidy up time and why they must use the steps and not climb up the slide itself when they want to use this equipment.

Both the three and four-year-olds demonstrate very good levels of imagination as they act out various roles. For example, they clearly relate what it was like in the 'olden days' as they become fully immersed in pretending to cook on an open fire. They clearly explain that straw and hay was used to make pillows and animal skins were used for bedding. They show flair and understanding as they pretend to decorate the inside of their play house using water to represent paint, carefully making sure they remove all the furniture first. They join in with singing and musical activities with enthusiasm as they divide into two groups at snack time and take turns to play instruments and serenade each other from their minstrels gallery. They show great interest in solving problems. For example, they find out which is the best type of sand to use for making sandcastles and conclude that if they add water to the sand they are more likely to be successful. They are very familiar with using technology. They operate the computer with confidence as they complete various programmes and they demonstrate good design skills as they make models of castles and insects from both manufactured resources and recyclable materials, such as lego, empty boxes and stones.

Children show a good understanding of number. For example, they join in enthusiastically with number rhymes, such as 'five fat sausages' when they hold up the correct number of fingers. They correctly identify which group has the most children as staff group them for some activities. They make good attempts to write various numerals in their number work books and can confidently and reliably count in excess of 10. They show a good understanding of size and shape. For example, they identify they have made a circle as they join the train track together and that some of the bricks they use during construction activities are rectangles. They correctly identify the different sized buckets and spades as they play in the sand and understand about capacity and weight as they identify that their bucket full of sand is much heavier than an empty one. Their physical skills are developing very well. For example, they use large equipment, such as the climbing frame safely and with good control. They use mark making resources, such as crayons and pencils, with good

control as they draw very detailed pictures and write their names, and they competently use scissors. However, they do not have access to a wide range of equipment to help them develop their balancing skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. Staff value each child's individuality and meet their needs well. Children's behaviour is very good. Staff are good role models for the children to follow as they are very patient in their approach. A calm atmosphere is evident throughout the pre-school. Staff support the youngest ones very well in sharing and turn taking and have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the three to five-year-olds. This helps the children to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. As a result, they demonstrate good manners, wait patiently for their turn as they use the equipment and take on responsibility. For example, they readily help at tidy up time, put on their own aprons before painting and pour their own drinks.

Children have opportunities to learn about the wider world and their local environment through a range of activities. For example, they learn about festivals from around the world, such as the Chinese New Year and learn about music and food from different countries as they use a computer disc relating to this. They visit the nearby public gardens and the library and they enjoy visiting the residents of a local care home for the elderly. They have good links with the local primary school. For example, the older children make visits to the reception class, which helps greatly with the transition to school. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

All children benefit from the partnership staff have developed with their parents. Babies settle well because staff work closely with their parents to ensure they follow their home routine. Staff share important information about their care needs and the activities that they have been involved in each day through the daily sheet they complete, which includes a record of sleeps and nappy changes. Useful information is displayed for parents, such as newspaper articles reporting on particular safety issues and information is displayed relating to the children's health. However, the pre-schools policies and procedures are not always shared effectively with parents.

The partnership with parents of the children who receive nursery education is good. Staff provide the parents with detailed written information about the Foundation stage and how they can support their child's learning at home. They are kept very well informed about forthcoming events and activities through the half-term topic sheet and are provided with 'home link' activities, such as number and writing activity sheets, which they are encouraged to complete with their child at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children's care needs are met appropriately and the leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The premises are well organised with indoor and outdoor space laid out to maximise play opportunities for the children. Activities are well planned and presented and staff observe and note the children's individual responses to these. They do not, however, always use this information to keep the children's records of progress up to date. As a result these do not always show a true picture of the good progress the children are making towards the early learning goals. All legally required documentation, which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is stored securely. The one exception to this is that although staff record any medication given to the children they do this on the child's daily sheet which goes home with the parent. This means that the pre-school does not keep a record as they are required to do under standard seven of the National Standards.

Children benefit from good levels of qualified and experienced staff, many of whom have been at the pre-school for a number of years. They are very enthusiastic and work well together as a team. Policies and procedures are in place to show how the pre-school operates. However, these are not reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the information is up to date and they are not shared effectively with the parents. In addition, the registered person has failed to inform Ofsted of a significant change affecting the registration, in this case a change of manger.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last nursery inspection it was recommended that the children should be encouraged to make more use of the computer.

Staff now keep a record of the children's access to the computer to enable them to track how this is being used and ensure that all the children have opportunities to use this. This has added significantly to the children's understanding of information technology.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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):

- ensure that the nettles in the outdoor area do not pose a threat to the children's safety
- ensure Ofsted is informed of all significant changes or events, in this case the change of manager
- ensure all policies are regularly reviewed and updated, are relevant to the setting and shared effectively with the parents
- improve the recording of any medication that is administered to the children to ensure an accurate record is kept.

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 the range of resources and opportunities for children to develop and extend their balancing skills
- ensure the systems for recording children's progress and development are fully implemented to enable staff to use this information effectively in charting the children's progress towards the early learning goals.

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