



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 305327

DfES Number: 541197

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	16/11/2004
Inspector Name	Susan, Helen Spencer

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St Michael's Pre-School
Setting Address	St. Michaels Church Devon Road Chester Cheshire CH2 2PX

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of St Michael's P.C.C
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	St Michael's P.C.C
Address	St. Michaels Church Devon Road Chester Cheshire CH2 2PX

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

The St Michael's Pre-school is organised and managed by a committee of church members. It is one of two pre-schools managed by them. It opened in 1975 and registered to accept funded children two years ago. It operates from the large, multi-use St Michael's Church Hall in the Newton district of Chester. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting opens in the mornings only, currently, from 09.30 to 12.00 weekdays, except for Wednesday. It operates during school term time only.

The setting is registered to care for 26 children. There are currently 27 children aged between two years six months and three years eight months on roll and they attend for a variety of sessions. Six children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery has a great deal of experience of supporting children identified as having special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight staff all of whom work with the children. They all have an early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare partnership.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at St Michael's Pre-school is good. It enables children to make generally good progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and very good progress in the other four areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff know the children individually and are very welcoming. They frequently join in children's games allowing the children to take the lead. They listen to what children have to say and respond well, thus extending children's language. Children's behaviour is well managed through good use of praise. Planning is linked to the national guidance but what the children will learn is not always clearly specified. Children are challenged, e.g. to copy their name and to pour their own drink from a jug. A few activities are not right for the age group. The provision for special educational needs is very strong.

Assessment procedures are generally good. Specific play activities are planned regularly to see how the children are progressing. Notes are made and recorded. Satisfactory use is made of each child's profile.

The leadership and management of the day nursery are generally good. The staff are a well-established team who strive to improve by frequently going on courses. They get clear direction from the manager in planning, policies and procedures. The monitoring and evaluation programme is not rigorous enough to give managers a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of provision.

The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are full of praise for the setting. They feel that the staff are very caring and they like the very good range of activities offered to their child. They receive good information about what their child is learning and this enables them to be involved. They find informative the informal chats they have with staff at the end of the day.

What is being done well?

- Children's confidence is increased by the very positive relationships between staff and children. This helps the children settle well and feel really secure.
- Children listen well and talk at the right times, using a wide vocabulary.
- The provision and support for children with special educational needs is knowledgeable, patient and very caring.
- Children's curiosity is fostered well by a good range of topics on the natural world.
- Children concentrate well at activities involving small toys because their dexterity is improving rapidly.

- Children really enjoy the wide range of art and craft activities.

What needs to be improved?

- the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
- the teaching of sorting, matching and comparing activities which proceed writing numbers
- the provision for 'mark making' in the role play area.

What has improved since the last inspection?

not applicable

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are warmly welcomed into the group and thus are confident to leave their parents. They show an interest and fascination in everything around them. They are encouraged to select what they want to do and to persist with tasks. They learn to take care of their personal needs, such as asking to go to the toilet and washing their hands before snack. They behave well because praise is used well by staff and they are learning to play together and share resources.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are keen to communicate with staff and other children and do so well, using words, phrases and sentences. They listen to stories attentively, recalling some of the major details. They hold books properly and talk about the story whilst turning the pages and looking at the pictures. Some children recognise their first name. They have good opportunities to learn how to hold and use a pencil, except in the role-play area where no paper and pencils were evident.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children sort objects using colour as a criteria. They collect groups of objects up to 3 confidently. However, they are introduced to written numbers before they fully understand sorting objects, matching patterns and comparing sets. They use numbers during songs quite well and are beginning to understand about 'one less than'. Children frequently use mathematical language well in their play, e.g. identifying shapes in the play dough and using long/short to describe the trains.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

A wide range of topics fosters children's curiosity. They talk about what they see with enthusiasm, like asking why the brown leaves are on the ground and the green still on the trees. When playing with the train set or farm children talk about 'station', 'farm house' and 'stable'. They control a good range of machines, like the play dough machine, the toy microwave and telephones. Children enjoy playing with construction toys and build towers and walls that they use in their imaginative play.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children move with good control. They stand and sit without help and stop on command. On the climbing frame they go up the ladder and down the slide gleefully. Children ride and steer tricycles with good control and most ride the scooter showing good balance. Small apparatus is handled with improving accuracy. Children join jig-saw pieces quite well, scissors are used safely and pencil and brush control are improving.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Very Good
Children express their ideas through a good range of planned and spontaneous art and craft activities. They know the basic colours and are starting to mix colours to get the tones they want. In the home corner children take on various roles like making the food, cleaning the clothes and talking on the telephone. Children sing with great enthusiasm. They recall most of the words and play instruments, like sleigh bells, to accompany the singing. They enjoy joining in with the actions.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- implement a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning
- offer children more experiences of pre-number activities, like sorting and matching
- provide opportunities for children to 'mark make' in the role play area.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.