



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN EY217236

DfES Number: 546208

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	18/01/2005
Inspector Name	Hilary Preece

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St Mary's Pre School
Setting Address	St. Marys Church George Street Watford Hertfordshire WD18 0EG

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Playgroup Committee of St.Marys PCC
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Playgroup Committee of St.Marys PCC
Address	George Street Watford Herts WD18 0EG

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

St Mary's Pre School opened in 2002. It operates from one large hall in St Mary's Church Centre in central Watford. It does not have access to a designated outside play area, though there is provision for physical play inside. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 28 children from two years to four years on the roll. This includes 13 three year olds and one four year old who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend a variety of sessions. The group can provide support for children who have special educational needs and currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:30 to 12:00.

The group is run by a committee made up of church members and staff. Two part-time staff and three full time staff work with the children. The pre-school leader holds a primary school teaching certificate and over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Two staff are intending to undertake a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

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 Mary's Preschool is of good quality overall. Children are making very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They make generally good progress in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development. Their progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is hindered by some significant weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff have a reasonably sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage which they use to plan a mostly well-balanced curriculum. They plan very well organised activities with clear learning objectives but there is less effective planning of the space and resources.

Staff assess children's learning against the stepping stones and early learning goals and use this information to plan what children should do next. They keep useful records which provide a clear picture of children's progress to share with parents.

Staff manage the children well and act as excellent role models. They are well deployed and interact well with the children. They provide support for children with special needs and use appropriate methods to aid progress with children who have English as an additional language.

The leadership and management of the setting is generally good. The group leader is highly motivated and leads a committed, hard-working staff team whose individual strengths are used effectively. She acts on advice and has implemented a system of staff development aimed at improving teaching. Monitoring and evaluating the nursery education should now be extended to cover all areas of learning.

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. They receive high quality information about the pre-school, including valuable information on the curriculum. They are well-informed about their children's achievements and how they can support their learning. Parents praise highly the care and education provided.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is given high priority. They are developing self-confidence, positive self-esteem, independence and keenness to learn. This provides the foundation for all future learning.
- Staff are skilful in developing children's language and communication. They introduce new vocabulary, pose open-ended questions and give children opportunities to recall past events and predict what might happen. This promotes children's thinking.
- Staff have worked hard to develop a positive partnership with parents.

Parents' involvement and the continual sharing of information enables them to be involved in their children's learning and aware of the progress they are making.

- Staff use an effective system of planning and assessment to monitor and evaluate children's achievement and progress. Their plans are flexible and adaptable which allows them to make the best use of unexpected opportunities or situations.
- Staff use appropriate strategies to manage children's behaviour. They consistently praise positive behaviour and are quick to minimise disruptive behaviour.

What needs to be improved?

- curriculum planning to ensure every aspect of the areas of learning are covered
- planning of the environment and use of resources to support learning

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable. This is the group's first nursery education inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children's confidence and self-esteem are promoted by caring staff. They enjoy helping and respond enthusiastically to praise. They show great curiosity and are keen to try new experiences, such as planting bulbs and seeds. Children concentrate very well and remain focused on a task until it is complete. They are forming secure relationships with adults and each other, and are learning to share. They have good independence skills, being able to wash their hands, peel fruit and select resources.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children listen with interest to stories, rhymes and songs. Some speak with confidence and others show developing communication skills that are being promoted through carefully modelled language by staff. Children are beginning to recognise their name cards at snack time, and some keenly attempt to write their names and shopping lists. Children do not have many opportunities to link sounds and letters or have access to resources that reflect the alphabet.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count at every opportunity, such as at register time with staff and freely during play. They use their fingers to count and are beginning to learn about addition and subtraction in songs and rhymes. Children can identify big and small and comment on play dough caterpillars that are the same size. They learn about shapes through a range of activities and use this knowledge to complete wooden puzzles. Children do not always have sufficient access to maths resources that aid learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Significant Weaknesses

Children use their senses to explore compost, grow seeds and take care of them. They construct music shakers from junk materials but opportunities to select tools and materials for their own use are limited. They develop a sense of place by visiting local buildings such as the church and shops. Children listen to their voice on a tape recorder and speak on the telephone but access to other ICT resources is limited. Children have few opportunities to know about beliefs of other people.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children have daily opportunities to use large and small apparatus inside. Some children climb, jump and hop. They show an awareness of space as they attempt to pedal trikes, balance on stilts and push dolls' buggies around the room. They manipulate play dough and spoon compost into pots to help their hand-eye co-ordination. Staff teach children that their bodies need different clothes when hot or cold but planning to promote health and bodily awareness is limited.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children explore textures when they handle wet sand, dry sand and cornflakes. They use their imagination through dressing-up, role-play, painting and play dough. For example, a child models 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' out of dough. They express themselves through music and enthusiastically shake their bodies like jellies and attempt to clap a rhythm. They explore sound when using musical instruments, though more frequent use would be beneficial.

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

- develop the planning to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered and are given equal emphasis
- plan the environment to ensure that resources are always available that enable children to make progress in all areas of learning.

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.