



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 105213

DfES Number: 530110

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	21/02/2005
Inspector Name	Paula Jane Hayhow

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	St. John's Pre-School
Setting Address	Birdsfoot Lane Luton Bedfordshire LU3 2DN

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	Mrs Julie Margaret Dyer
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ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and 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 John's Pre-school is a well established group and has been opened since 1974.

It is a privately run group and the present owner has been running it since the year 2000.

The Pre-school is situated in the main hall of St John's Methodist Church Hall, which is in the Warden Hill area of Luton. The Pre-school has sole use, during its operational hours, of the main hall, smaller room, kitchen and toilet facilities . They also have access to an enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 54 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 37 funded three year olds and 13 funded four year olds. The setting is able to support children who have special needs and currently supports 5 children who speak English as an additional language. Children can attend for a variety of sessions.

Although the Pre school is registered for 36 children aged 2 years to under 5 years, the admissions policy states the group does not care for children under the age of 2 years 9 months.

The opening hours are 9:15 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Monday to Friday, and also 12:45 p.m. to 15:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays, term time only.

There is a staff team of eight. Three staff have recognised early years qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 3 and a further two staff members are currently working towards the same level of child care qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is accredited through the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA) Accreditation Scheme.

How good is the Day Care?

St John's Pre-school provides satisfactory quality care for children.

The staff are dedicated and have a good commitment to training. The induction of

staff is particularly well featured. The staff have created a welcoming atmosphere and make best use of the space available to them. The group plan to give a higher priority to staff deployment to focus children more readily. They offer children a wide selection of toys and activities and staff take time to get to know individuals and settle them securely. The staff ensure all can participate, gaining an appreciation of equality and justice through interaction and resources. They are particularly skilled in caring for children with special needs and ensure resources are easily accessible, thus promoting children's free choice and independence.

The children's health and safety is promoted and staff monitor this informally but plan a more thorough assessment record. The group are to review the washing procedure to ensure children have warm water. Staff are fully aware of children's dietary needs, recording them and ensuring that these are understood and met by all.

Staff recognise the importance of having good relationships with parents. They provide clear information about the setting and keep parents well informed on a daily basis through the use of a notice board, newsletters and regular discussions with staff.

The group work hard to ensure all paperwork is in place, updated and professionally presented. They are in the process of revising the complaints, outings and the lost child policy. The group also plan to acquire permission for the seeking of emergency medical advice.

The staff use consistent strategies for managing behaviour and the children know what is expected of them and behaviour is good. They plan to monitor children who are having difficulties more closely. The atmosphere is busy and the children respond well to staff and show a good level of interaction and care of each other.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group were asked at the previous inspection to update their policies and practices e.g. medication policy, fire log book, child protection and staff's knowledge and understanding of the local child protection procedures.

The group now has a clear policy on the administration of medication. The fire log is in place and documents the date and evaluation of fire drills.

The staff have had in-service training as to the local child protection procedure and the policy includes all relevant contact details.

What is being done well?

- The group have effective procedures for vetting persons working with children and have a good induction pack/procedure, enabling staff to give children well informed care.
- Staff are committed to ongoing training and are supported and encouraged in this, ensuring that they have a good awareness of a variety of needs of the

children and how these may be met.

- Good staff interaction with the children means that the children are encouraged, secure and feel confident with accessing a range of activities which promotes their development. The procedure for settling in children works well.
- There is a good selection of toys and equipment to provide the children with a stimulating environment and promote equality of opportunity. The accessibility of the equipment promotes children's independence.
- Staff are aware of potential hazards and take positive action to ensure the safety and security of the children. In particular the entrance door to the building is secure and monitored vigilantly.
- Staff are experienced in identifying children's special needs and ensuring these are met. They are skilled in enabling children to participate in the activities and opportunities offered.
- Staff have a good procedure for managing behaviour which sets clear boundaries about what is right and wrong for the children, appropriate to their stages of development, in order that they know what is expected of them.
- Parents are kept well informed about the provision and what their children have been doing through regular written and verbal communications. This refers to policies, newsletters, a notice board and individual key worker interviews.

What needs to be improved?

- the vetting checks e.g. CRB and DC2 clearances
- the deployment of staff
- the risk assessment and implementation of health and safety measures
- the policies available to parents

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
6	ensure regular risk assessments of the premises and equipment identify action to be taken which will minimize the risk to children e.g. daily risk assessments, observations of risks within the play situation
1	provide evidence that persons over 16 have CRB and DC2 clearance
2	ensure the deployment of staff consistently supports the children particularly when reviewing behaviour management practice
7	ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing
7	request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment
12	ensure all policies are up to date and available to parents e.g. for outings, and a lost child policy, and ensure that the complaints policy includes the regulator's details

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 John's Pre-School is acceptable. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses in all areas of learning with the exception of personal, social and emotional development which is generally good.

Teaching has significant weaknesses overall. The staff work very hard to provide professional documentation, planning and photographic evidence of their provision. There is some good interaction. Some lovely play activities are devised and children enjoy themselves, learning through play across the six areas of learning. There is an appropriate balance between adult and child led play. However, planning is overly complex and the group has become confused when trying to use the stepping stones in daily practice. This results in the activities lacking sufficient educational focus and direction. Children sometimes wander aimlessly between activities because they have exhausted the initial value of the activity and the current plans do not support the staff to develop the educational content of play beyond the first stages. Activities do not offer enough challenge to interest and motivate learning in the more able and older children. Assessment records are in place but these do not correlate with the stepping stones and are not therefore effective in providing information to guide the next steps in children's learning.

Leadership and management is generally good. The manager currently works alongside her staff team and this does not enable her sufficient time to observe and monitor the quality of the daily practice. Through the inspection process, she has become aware of the shortcomings in planning and assessment and demonstrates a very clear commitment to the improvement of the educational provision.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Good information about the educational programme is provided for parents and they seem to be happy with the provision.

What is being done well?

- High priority is given to the development of children's personal, social and emotional skills. The staff are friendly, kind and caring and develop positive relationships with the children. The overall standard of staff involvement with children is an asset to the pre-school and ensures that children are happy and well cared for.
- The staff team are beginning to work well together and demonstrate a real desire to improve practice at the pre-school for the benefit of the children. The leader and her deputy now have a clear vision for future progress and plan to lead their team with renewed enthusiasm and direction.
- Observations of daily practice, teaching and learning are now being used to

reassess the effectiveness of the provision and provide a basis from which to improve the quality of the daily routines and activities.

What needs to be improved?

- the clarity of planning to underpin the learning programme
- the expectation of children's abilities and the degree of challenge for older/more able children
- the systems for recording, reporting and assessment of children's progress and achievements

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the previous inspection, issues were raised about the level of challenge presented to children and the extension of opportunities to learn about different cultures. Whilst the group have made genuine progress in the inclusion of a range of activities to support learning about other cultures, the quality of teaching does not presently support effective learning. Staff's expectations of the children are too low and the level of challenge presented to children continues as an issue following this current inspection.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children are confident and happy to participate in familiar group activities such as weekend news, where even the quietest members are encouraged to speak a few words. They show a well developed sense of community, listen politely, take turns and are well behaved. Relationships are good and children develop good self care skills, although opportunities for making choices and becoming independent learners are somewhat restricted. Some children do not demonstrate a keen interest in learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children develop spoken language through play. However, there is insufficient planned teaching to promote progressive reading and writing skills in the more able children. A mark making table potentially supports the development of early writing skills, but materials are not always provided to develop these skills in practical situations e.g. role play. Familiar names, words and letters are not evident in the environment and there is little opportunity to link sounds with letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Many children count beyond ten but do not use their counting skills frequently in practical contexts. The pre-school has suitable resources for developing the children's comparing, sorting and matching skills but learning is often restricted to keyworker group activities. Staff do not incorporate sufficient mathematical learning within the daily routines of the pre-school and do not provide appropriate activities to support the development of problem solving and calculation skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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The children enjoy access to sand, water, messy activities and small world play. The staff interact appropriately to talk about events in children's lives both past and present. There are good opportunities for children to use technological toys such as binoculars. However, plans do not support the development of skills in a meaningful way. Activities lack interest and do not always promote the development of children's desire to observe, investigate and explore the world around them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children move about the church hall confidently with control and co-ordination, showing an awareness of space, themselves and others. Children have regular opportunities to enjoy freely chosen activities outdoors and they use a range of small and large equipment and tools with increasing control. However, plans do not presently support the acquisition of skills in a purposeful and progressive manner and staff do not always promote learning effectively.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Significant Weaknesses
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Children experience an adequate range of media and staff always encourage children to express their own ideas. However, staff have a vague idea of the intended purpose of some activities and do not intervene appropriately to ensure that children learn effectively through role play. Music features in the programme and children enjoy rhymes and songs. Children have suitable opportunities to respond using their senses and to use their imagination in art and design, dance, role play and stories.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable but has some significant areas for improvement. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is limited by some significant weaknesses. The next inspection will take place in one to two years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Simplify the planning system ensuring that staff identify clear intentions for children's learning, closely related to the stepping stones and the early learning goals.
- Revise the assessment system to enable children's progress to be tracked against the stepping stones and to enable staff to use the information gained from the records to determine the next steps in children's learning.
- Use the Foundation Stage Guidance to develop a rich, challenging environment which extends the learning of the more able/older children across the six 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.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.