



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 315245

DfES Number: 512275

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 14/06/2004
Inspector Name Lynda, Margaret Ronan

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Marys Playgroup
Setting Address St Marys Church Hall
Crouchley Lane, Lymm
Warrington
Cheshire
WA13 OEF

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Mary's Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Mary's Playgroup
Address St Mary's Church Hall
Crouchley Lane
Lymm
Cheshire
WA13 0AN

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 Mary's Pre-School opened in 1976. It operates from two rooms in the church hall which is a detached wooden building. The group serves all of the local community.

There are currently 45 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes 22 funded 3 year olds and 7 funded 4 year olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The group supports children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. On Monday, Tuesday and Friday the group operates from 09:15 until 13:00 and on Wednesday and Thursday the sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are seven part time staff and one full time member of staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Warrington SureStart Partnership.

How good is the Day Care?

St Mary's Pre-School provides good quality care for children. The provision is well organised and curriculum planning for children is very good. Staff are interested in children's achievements and support their learning appropriately. Thoughtfully chosen, good quality resources support all areas of learning. Children receive personal attention and continuity of care is promoted through a key worker system. Children's independence is promoted as they are encouraged to undertake tasks that promote their growing independence and self esteem. Children are encouraged to show care and concern for others and to behave well. There are minor omissions in documentation.

Children's safety and welfare is positively promoted; staff are vigilant and observant.

Children are appropriately supported to begin to take responsibility for their own safety and well being. Inclusion is promoted through activities and careful attention to the learning environment.

Children enjoy the choice and variety of activities, for example learning to use their senses through practical activities such as identifying liquidised summer fruits through observation, taste and smell. Children with additional needs attend the setting and are very well supported, ensuring successful outcomes for all children. Staff work very well as a team to support children's development in all aspects. Staff monitor children's progress to ensure they achieve their potential.

Records are routinely shared with parents. Parents often play an active role in the life of the pre-school and are well informed about the daily routines and activities. Parents have access to comprehensive policies and procedures. Parents make very positive comments regarding the service.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the provider was asked to enhance information for parents by supplying current information regarding contact details for the regulator and committee and management members, this has been satisfactorily achieved.

The provider was asked to improve the safety of children by ensuring radiators, gas and electric appliances and electrical circuits and stacked tables were safe. The provider was also required to ensure the public liability cover was up to date. Safety certificates have been obtained and action taken to ensure radiators and tables do not pose a hazard resulting in a safer environment for children. There is a current liability certificate displayed in the hall.

The provider was asked to maintain documentation regarding the protection of children to include confirmation of staff clearances and to include in the child protection policy a procedure to follow should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of staff. A suitable procedure is in place that strengthens the protection of children within the setting: however staff employment documentation regarding checks remains inconsistent.

What is being done well?

- The staff group is stable, well qualified, access regular training and has experience of working with young children. This results in children being happy, settled, appropriately challenged and familiar with their surroundings.
- The operational plan is very effective and space and resources are effectively organised to promote all areas of learning within a given activity or area. An example being the attractive writing area where children use their imaginations to draw and write, physical skills to operate whole punches, bull dog clips and to utilise different writing implements, mathematical skills and language to order and sequence equipment and communication skills to write luggage labels, messages on post its, postcards to post to themselves (delightedly receiving them the next day) and link letters to sounds.

- Children have fun and are making very good progress in their development. Children are respected and their personal independence is promoted. Children choose to create, communicate, experiment, calculate or run, climb and jump. They make their own play doh, reading the recipe, measuring and stirring the ingredients, discussing and choosing the colour and add glitter for texture and aesthetic result and observe the changes: oil floating, flour lumps disappearing and the transformation cooking effects, all skilfully supported by staffs' open questions.
- Behaviour is managed skilfully and positively, enabling children to behave well and begin to resolve their own differences. Staff have devised an excellent, positive behaviour management policy, including a section on bullying and discriminatory remarks or actions. The policy is effectively put into practice. Staff observe children playing outside and model desired behaviour.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

Children identified as having additional needs are making very good progress as a result of the staff group working cooperatively to make useful and valuable observations of all children and sharing this information to facilitate the early identification of possible concerns and early and effective intervention. They monitor children with additional needs monthly, setting and evaluating targets and providing new or revised targets. The group fully involve and inform the parents, recognising the parents' unique knowledge and understanding of the child. The SENCO has attended additional training both generic and specific. Examples being attendance on a course for children with sensory difficulties where she experienced, through use of equipment, how a child with glue ear perceives sound so that she can fully appreciate the physical, emotional and intellectual difficulties of the child and a course on recent disability legislation. These courses are cascaded to the staff, who as a result re-evaluate their practice for example by giving more visual clues to children with glue ear and reducing background noise where ever possible. The group have devised a comprehensive list of information and help sources to share with parents. They use a specialist library resource to provide children with stories that enable them to understand additional needs such as Asthma. They have given thought as to how the group can comply with recent legislation and looked at ways of adapting their practice.

What needs to be improved?

- the procedures for documentation

Outcome of the inspection

Good

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
2	Record the actual times of attendance of children, staff and visitors.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St Mary's Playgroup provides high quality education overall which enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. The interaction with children, use of observation to plan children's progress, the organisation of the environment to support children's independent access to resources all reflect staffs' clear understanding of how children learn and combine effectively to contribute to children being active and successful learners. Staff are excellent role models. The provision for music lacks balance.

Leadership and management of the playgroup are very good. Communication is excellent and is supported by regular weekly meetings and formal staff meetings every half term. This results in a stable and cohesive staff group who are able to provide a secure environment for children. The links between the committee and the operational staff are well fostered through attendance of representatives at committee and staff meetings. Committee members attend a full session of the playgroup on a weekly basis which results in excellent policies understood by all. The commitment to continual improvement is shown in the amount of training offered to staff and the quality of the educational programme. They have good relationships with the local community which have positive results for the children, for example, the country rangers helped staff to plan a stimulating outdoor area for the children to use.

Partnership with parents is very good. The group operate an open door policy and parents provide a volunteer rota. Parents are given good written information about the setting, the educational provision and their child. Their knowledge of their child is sought, respected and acted upon. They are not, however given opportunity to formally record observations of their child in the assessment process.

What is being done well?

- Children have outstanding opportunities to gain confidence and knowledge in mathematics. Maths pervades each area within the playgroup providing children with excellent practical activities to count, calculate, estimate, compare, use number for a purpose, explore, sequence and problem solve.
- Staff are conscientious and skilful in monitoring children's progress, which allows them to intervene at an early stage if difficulties are perceived, resulting in children's progress being very well supported and particularly the needs of those children with additional needs.
- Children behave very well and often resolve their own differences. Staff use effective questioning techniques. They are responsive and manage children's

behaviour extremely well. There is a strong commitment to further development and training opportunities. Staff work cohesively as a team to support children in a well organised and stimulating environment.

- Children have a good knowledge of the world and are keen to know more. They learn through meaningful "hands on " activities be it dressing in a real sari or using a machine to make smoothies. They guess whether a chamber pot borrowed from Warrington Museum is a mixing bowl and are skilfully guided by staff's open questions to the correct conclusion. The children's answer to the question "Would you eat a cake mixed in this bowl?" is a resounding "No".
- Staff have a secure understanding of how children learn and provide rich experiences for children.

What needs to be improved?

- the refining of the balance within the curriculum of planned and continuous provision opportunities within the areas of music
- the further development of formal participation of parents in the assessment process of their child.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection no key issues were raised however the group were asked to give consideration to increasing children's access to technology and to promote children's awareness of rhyme. Very good progress has been made in these areas. Children have an excellent awareness of rhyme and are happy to supply rhyming words and spontaneously make up their own rhymes. Whilst reading a story "Pass the Jam Jim Jim Jam" they add "Pass the Melon Ellen" without encouragement. They access technology in a meaningful way, using a programmable till in the green-grocery shop, using a calculator to add up the bill and weighing the produce on shop scales.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy, confident individuals. They make relationships with others easily and enjoy sharing their ideas and being part of a group. They are enthusiastic learners, keen to try new experiences and become engrossed in their chosen and group activities. They behave very well and learn the necessity of rules through practical activities for example whilst playing on the road system in the garden they tell each other you should look both ways and listen before crossing the road.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children talk enthusiastically about their experiences and communicate their ideas and thoughts very well, they predict and deduce outcomes. Children enjoy reading and writing for a wide variety of practical and meaningful purposes. They "read" the price list and write order lists in the greengrocers, asking staff for help; "What does curly c for carrot look like?" Children enjoy stories and rhymes and participate eagerly, confidently and competently supplying rhyming words for themselves.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are learning to be confident mathematicians by succeeding at practical activities. They measure ingredients and weigh fruit and recognise numbers in a price list. Children can count the church bells striking, calculate how many cherries are left when two have been eaten. Children discuss shape and have fun following instructions to stand next to, behind and in between each other.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children explore the world they live in and are curious and inquisitive. They enjoy learning about trees, birds and seeds playing a game with the park ranger. They learn to use all their senses whilst identifying liquidised fruit and to formulate theories based on evidence. They gain a sense of the world identifying hot and cold countries on a map and placing fruit where it grows in the world. Children deduce the uses of a flat iron, candle stick and chamber pot whilst learning about their past.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use a wide range of equipment. They move around negotiating objects with confidence and control. Children run, hop, jump, climb, balance, throw and catch objects with increasing skill for example whilst at the coconut shy. They enjoy playing outside where opportunities for physical challenges and robust play are encouraged. Children use fine motor skills well, handling tools skilfully and competently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Opportunities for self-expression and creativity are a strength. Children are absorbed in the two role-play areas and link the greengrocers and home area in their play. Children select art and craft activities for themselves and enjoy the freedom to exercise choice and produce work that is entirely their own. Children have good opportunities to express their feelings, which are acknowledged and valued; be it their opinions of "Scarey Mary" their scarecrow or a discussion about sharing.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very 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

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report, but consideration should be given to improving the following:
- the more detailed tracking of the balance within the curriculum of planned activities and provision through continuous provision for music
- the further development of parental involvement in the assessment of their child by provision of a means to record their contribution.

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.