

St Mary's Pre School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Emily Alderson
Setting address	322 Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 4BD
Telephone number	0780 8119560
E-mail	
Registered person	St Mary's Pre School Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

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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 provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

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 good. 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 Mary's Pre School Playgroup opened in April 1999. It operates from a large church hall in a residential area in east Ipswich. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 09:10 until 11:40 and Monday and Friday afternoons from 12:40 until 15:10, term time only. Children access a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from two and a half to five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five part-time staff. Of these four including the play leader, hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children attend a setting which has good health and hygiene practices. The majority of staff have accessed food hygiene training and are therefore able to implement the correct procedures. Staff who prepare snack do so correctly, minimising cross-infection as their hands are washed, the tables cleaned and food is correctly stored in the fridge or cupboards. Children learn to understand simple good health and living as they independently wash their hands. They use the liquid soap and paper towels provided and are reminded to do so by the poster displayed above the sinks. Children access tissues to blow their noses, disposing of them in the bin provided. The setting has in the past arranged for a dental hygienist to talk to the children which further contributes to teaching them about good health.

Children receive good care when they are ill or had an accident as all staff have attended first aid training. The setting is very proactive in accessing additional training, such as the use of an epi-pen, to ensure that the best care can be provided. In addition, the setting have a well equipped first aid box accessible on the premises. Should children have an accident a record is filled in and parents are asked to sign to acknowledge the entry. Parents consent to staff administering medication and any given is recorded and shared with parents. Although parents provide written permission to seek emergency medical treatment, this consent does not completely cover situations when the setting may need to seek both emergency medical advice and treatment. Consequently, children's well-being in a medical emergency is potentially compromised. Children suffering from long term allergies have an

individual care plan, which gives staff further information about their condition along with any action needed if the child has a reaction. If a child becomes unwell at the setting the parents are called to collect them. They are advised of the length of time their child should remain at home via the setting's policy and through the communicable disease information sheet in the operational plan.

Children's physical play experiences are well promoted because the children have access to a range of resources and equipment. Children regularly use the climbing frame, slide, balls and bikes in the sectioned off part of the hall. In addition, the children often go on short walks so that they regularly access the outdoors. The resources enable children to practise their skills, such as pedalling on a bike and climbing, using their arms to pull themselves up. Children are developing an awareness of their body as they independently use the toilet and know when they are hot and cold. Children move their bodies in different ways, aware of the space around them particularly when they use the bikes. Children competently use a range of equipment in the setting such as the rolling pins when playing with the play dough and scissors, understanding how they work.

Children have their health and dietary needs well met and increase their understanding of healthy living as the setting provide them with healthy nutritious snacks. Children have access to water throughout the session and also have milk available to them at snack time. Snacks are varied and include fruit, vegetables, crackers, crumpets and toast. Children's dietary requirements are met as all staff are aware of any dietary needs as they are noted on a sheet in the kitchen. Any food provided is according to parents' wishes as detailed on the child's registration form.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is very warm and welcoming for children, staff, parents and carers because the staff create a very inviting setting. Resources are very well presented to the children either on mats on the floor or on tables so that all children can access them throughout the session. Staff smile as they welcome the children, helping them to settle as they choose an activity. The hall is brightly decorated with children's work and posters. The space is very well organised to best meet the needs of the children, giving them plenty of space to explore and learn. Staff deploy themselves very well at the setting, enabling all children to be supervised and offer help if needed. The setting is clean and tidy and the resources used are fit for purpose. Children use very safe and suitable equipment. The resources are regularly checked and anything deemed unsuitable is removed so that children remain safe. The setting provides children with a wide range of resources, catering for the ages and the abilities of the children who attend.

The setting arrangements meet health and safety guidelines. Prior to children attending staff carry out a daily risk assessment of the building. The assessment includes ensuring that fire exits are accessible and that the floor and tables are clean. This is recorded on a weekly sheet. Children are safe at the setting as they are

unable to leave the premises unsupervised. The front door remains locked during the sessions and the back door is secure. The hall is sectioned using brightly coloured fences with gates. Staff use these well to decide where children access, keeping them safe and fully supervised at all times. Children are learning to keep themselves safe through group discussions. They are learning about road safety and understand that when the green man lights up it is safe to cross the road. Children are involved in setting the ground rules and therefore understand the importance of them. For example, the need to be careful when using the slide.

In the event of a fire children are well protected as the staff have a thorough evacuation procedure in place which is practised monthly with the children. Comments are recorded to enable the procedure to be assessed and continually improved. The setting has taken precautions by having a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket readily available in the kitchen. Children are very safe on outings as there is a high staff to child ratio to ensure that they can be fully supervised. Children are very well protected because staff understand their role in safeguarding children. They have all accessed training and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. The setting has a confidential book where concerns that arise are recorded. Parents are informed of the staffs' duties via the settings well-written policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting happily, waving goodbye to their parents, involving themselves in the daily routines of the setting. Children are engaged in their chosen activities as they are able to make choices about their day as they enter and self-select from the range of activities on offer. The resources provided are fun meaningful activities that cover all areas of learning and stages of development. The room is sectioned into different areas with messy activities on the tables, a book corner, a computer area, writing table, physical activity area and construction, amongst other things. Staff are very well deployed, allowing them to sit with a group of children participating in their play. Children are comfortable in the environment and feel able to participate in new activities supported and guided by staff. Their efforts are rewarded with praise as staff congratulate them, telling them how well they have done. Staff genuinely enjoy their time with the children and it is evident that good relationships have been fostered. Children often approach the staff asking them to sit with them or join in with play. The children are taken on short walks and have also been to the theatre, zoo and shops and had picnics in the park, all of which further contribute to their experiences and learning. Children under three years of age are positively supported through planned activities in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Each child has a record of assessment which has observations made by staff. These are used to plan future activities and as a basis for the Foundation Stage when they reach the age of three.

The Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the

Foundation Stage and provide children with a wide range of interesting activities across the six areas of learning. A theme is selected for each half term and is currently 'wheels'. The stepping stones are identified through the medium term plan and are written under the six area of learning. A stepping stone is selected for each session and an adult-focussed activity is planned. The activity is written onto the adult-focused activity sheet and identifies different aspects such as which areas of learning it links with, resources needed and differentiation amongst other things. However, not all aspects are consistently filled in, which reflects in the delivery of the activity as sometimes minimal information is noted, limiting staff's knowledge of the activity. Children's individual interests are discussed at weekly team meetings and are taken into account and reflected in the following weeks planning. This is usually accomplished through the resources selected. For example one child was particularly interested in the till and therefore the home corner was turned into a café to enable the child to use the till in their imaginative play. This meets children's individual needs and interests.

Assessment and evaluation is recorded on the daily sheet. The member of staff carrying out the activity is responsible for noting how the activity went, whether the children met the intended learning, and improvements and ideas for future planning. However, this is not consistently completed and therefore impacts on future planning. As the activity is not evaluated it does not enable future improvements to be made or enable staff to identify gaps in children's learning. In addition, staff use labels to record their observations on individual children which are then transferred into their assessment folders. Each child has a step by step record of achievement which staff complete every term. Staff use effective methods to engage children by using open-ended questions, involving them in the conversation and encouraging them to ask questions in return. Children are well behaved and listen to the staff.

Children are progressing in their learning through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Children at the setting are confident and motivated to learn. They are inquisitive, happily asking how or why questions to gain more information. Their self-esteem is increasing through tasks that promote independence, such as snack time. Children help themselves to a cup and food and pour their own drinks, waiting patiently for the jug to be passed around the table. Children understand the need to put an apron on prior to painting and know to wash their hands after, demonstrating their developing self-care skills. Children are aware of how conversations take place, listening whilst the another person talks. Children use language to talk about their activities, explaining their actions. They are able to link sounds to letters with one child sounding out the letter 'J' and saying 'J is the start of my name'. Children are able to recognise their names as they select their name card as part of registration and at snack time. They enjoy looking at the books and through the setting's library programme they are also able to enjoy them at home with their family. Children enjoy accessing the well-equipped writing table using the range of resources to mark-make.

Children's maths skills are developing through everyday routines, such as counting at registration where they count as a group the amount of children present. Children are able to say how old they are and enjoy comparing themselves with other

children. Children's calculation skills are developing through participating in maths activities such as playing with the 'beebob'. They use their counting skills to programme the electrical device to move in certain directions and a particular number of squares. Children also use their calculation skills during their imaginative play. For example one child making a cat explains 'my cat has two legs at the front and two at the back which makes four legs'. The children enjoy exploring and investigating different things such as playdough, which the setting have in different colours and with glitter or rice in it changing the texture. They use the construction bricks to make different models, using their imaginations to direct their play. Children have an awareness of time and often talk about their family life and when their next birthday is.

Children use their bodies in a number of different ways, using the pincer grip to hold pencils and demonstrating their competency by handling small objects such as puzzles, and manoeuvring large construction blocks by pushing and pulling. Children enjoy music and joining in with singing familiar songs and rhymes. They enjoy listening to music on the tape recorder and experiment with different musical instruments. Children enjoy using their imaginations to create art work and make believe in the well-equipped home corner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all included and their differences acknowledged because they are given plenty of opportunity to share their experiences during group discussions and also on a one-to-one basis with staff. Children are made to feel valued as their work is proudly displayed on the walls for everyone to see. They are fully involved in the setting's routines as they each have a box which they hang in the setting, removing their name card and self-registering on arrival. This helps the children to feel a sense of belonging and they enjoy showing their parents the routine. The setting has daily helpers who are responsible for different tasks. For example, when the children self-register the daily helper helps to hang the children's names on the fence so that staff can clearly see who is present. Children are made to feel special as their birthdays are acknowledged and celebrated. Children are learning very well about diversity through the resources and the planned activities in the setting. Past activities have included Holi a Hindu festival, Eid a Muslim festival and Christmas. Children who attend come from diverse backgrounds and religions. The setting work well with the parents to better understand each of their religions, and parents often come into the setting to talk to the children. In the past parents have cooked special foods with the children, sung in Spanish and talked about Eid, helping children to learn through practical activities. The resources positively reflect diversity and the setting have their welcome poster in different languages welcoming everyone who attends.

Children's individual needs are being met as staff take the time to get to know each child so that they can meet their needs. The setting cares for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and currently care for a number of children who have English as an additional language. Children are well cared for as the setting has a

trained special educational needs co-ordinator. She works closely with the local authority to access further help and support. In the past the setting have worked with translators and use methods such as simple repetitive stories and songs to get the children involved. Children understand appropriate behaviour because the staff are good role models. The setting has a well-written policy which is reflected in practice. Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management and children understand the boundaries of the setting as they have been involved in setting them. Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs and ensure that the child is fully included in the setting. The setting has a welcome board in the entrance hall with posters and very useful information for parents. Parent involvement is encouraged by the key worker system which gives each staff responsibility for a few children and maintain links with parents. Parents are informed of how to make a complaint through the well-written policy and the poster displayed.

Partnership with Parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting and the nursery education. They initially receive information through discussions with staff who explain the Foundation Stage and how they record children's progress. Parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child through completing an 'all about me book' which gives the staff further information about children's capabilities, likes and dislikes amongst other information. The nursery education plans are clearly displayed on a board for parents to see what their children will be doing during the week. The settings' newsletter and curriculum letter informs the parents of future themes and invites them to participate and share their ideas. Children's progress is shared with the parents on a daily basis through informal discussions. In addition, open evenings are held once a term where parents are invited to meet their key worker and look through their child's record of achievement. Parents are given the opportunity to share their ideas, via the suggestion box their observations and ideas are listened to and implemented into the planning wherever possible. They are also asked to complete a questionnaire giving them further opportunities to share their views on the setting. In the past parents have been actively involved in the children's activities either by sharing their knowledge or by coming to help at a session. This shows the parents commitment and the evident relationships formed between them and the staff at the setting.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing their self-esteem, have formed very positive relationships with staff and children, behave very well and are developing an awareness of differences through discussions and planned activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are safe as they are cared for by individuals who have been vetted and by staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development. The setting place a great emphasis on training and all staff currently hold first aid certificates safeguarding children. Most staff have carried out food hygiene training.

In addition, individual members are trained in specific areas with a range of courses accessed. Examples include puppets, challenging behaviour, outdoor play, story telling and planning for children's learning. Children are well looked after as the setting has a clear understanding of the National Standards and their responsibility to comply with them. Ratios are always adhered to and staff deploy themselves very effectively to positively meet the needs of the children who attend. Team work is evident as staff communicate to each other throughout the day making sure that each member is aware of their duties.

Children's well-being is promoted by the very well-organised records and policies. An accurate register is maintained and indicates the times of arrival. Parents are requested to fill in a registration form when their child starts at the setting. It gives staff vital information about their child to enable them to care appropriately for them. All records are stored accessibly and confidentially on the premises. The setting have a thorough operational plan with lots of very useful information giving parents a further insight into how the setting is run. Policies and procedures are in place and are reflected in practice. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is good. The setting is well led as they fully support their staff through an induction procedure. The staff have training plans in place to identify their training needs, any identified are acknowledged by booking onto training contributing to staffs' professional development. Staff meetings are held every Friday allowing staff the opportunity to discuss how the week has been and address any issues that have arisen. These meetings also enable staff to share good practice and continue to build their professional relationships. The setting monitor and evaluate the quality of care and education through parental feedback via the suggestion box and the questionnaires. They also communicate with the local schools where they have strong links with the teachers. The setting is good at assessing its strengths and areas of improvement and continually do so through self-evaluation. The setting is very committed to improving and has completed the Suffolk Quality Assurance Scheme which encouraged them to assess their practice and make the improvements necessary. In addition the setting has a thorough self-evaluation form which identifies areas they would like to improve showing clear aims for the future.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting indicated that they intended to develop the outside play provision. They have since had a new safety surface laid to enable children to safely play. Unfortunately the surface gets very slippery when it is wet and therefore play is limited to dry days. Staff are currently looking into ways of improving it.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting agreed to continue to develop more systematic evaluation of children's progress to effectively plan for the next steps in their learning. Since the last inspection the setting have introduced individual observations on children during activities. These are transferred directly into

children's records of achievements. However, the information is still not used to plan the next steps of children's learning.

Complaints about the childcare provision

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

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 good. 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 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):

- request parental permission for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future.

The quality and standards of nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- write and evaluate plans consistently
- ensure that evaluation and assessment informs future planning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2473) which is available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk