

St Francis Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 103842
Inspection date 21/03/2011
Inspector Beryl Witheridge

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St Francis Pre-school opened in 1968 and operates from two rooms in a church hall. It is situated in the town of Strood in Rochester, Kent. A maximum of 32 children, from two years to the end of the early years age group, may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 8.30am to 3.00pm for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Children aged three and four years receive funding for nursery education. This provision is registered on the Early Years Register and both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children come from a local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also a number of children who use English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff; of these, six of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are three staff working towards updating their qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff effectively promote the unique needs of each child and support their welfare and learning. Staff identify learning needs for individual children but the planning does not always reflect this. Children explore within safe boundaries and enjoy being with staff and one another. However, hygiene practices at the milk bar are not monitored closely by staff. The partnerships between the setting, parents and other agencies are very well established and help to ensure that the care and learning needs of the children are being met. The setting clearly identifies their strengths and weaknesses and has identified areas for improvement. Ongoing aims to develop the setting helps to promote the outcomes for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- provide planning which recognises the needs of every child but is flexible enough to include and cater for the individual needs of the children
- review the induction and on the job training for staff to ensure that good food hygiene routines are being followed

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively through the setting's policies and procedures that help to promote their welfare at all times. Staff have an up-to-date understanding of child protection issues, they know where to access important information and know exactly what to do in the event of a concern. They have a thorough understanding about their roles and responsibilities towards the children in their care. Practises are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective and continue to put children's welfare first. Systems for recruitment and vetting are robust and rigorous and help to ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable to do so. Ongoing monitoring of staff performance, through appraisals, helps to promote children's welfare effectively. The risk assessment is very clear, it covers all areas of the setting and daily checks help to identify and minimise the risk of accidental injury to children.

The setting has a commitment towards continuous improvement; they are clearly evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, and staff know the areas they want to develop and where they are doing well. The previous recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed, helping to improve practice for the children attending. The addition of the secure outdoor area has extended the opportunities for children to have daily outdoor play throughout the year. The provision of toys, resources and experiences are good and enable children to make independent choices, as well as learn through effective adult support.

Equality and diversity is embedded into every day practice. This is a very inclusive setting. Staff monitor their practices to ensure the needs of all children are supported. Children have plenty of opportunities to learn about diversity in society, and the needs and wishes of all children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are fully addressed. All experiences are available to all children, providing them with a wide variety of opportunities to learn and develop.

Good partnership working supports the needs of individual children and their families. The setting has excellent links with other agencies and professionals who are involved in the care of the children and their families. Effective liaison helps to offer children continuity of care and learning.

Children benefit from good partnerships between the staff and their parents. Staff work closely with parents and share a range of information including the 'Learning Story' for their child with them. Parents feel their children are well cared for by staff who know them well. They are happy with their children's progress and feel that they can approach staff at any time to speak about their child; they describe staff as friendly, approachable and professional. This is an essential role of the group in supporting the children and their families.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children show they feel safe. They are happy, settled and secure because staff provide close care, are attentive and respond swiftly to their needs. They sit with the children either on the floor or at the table. Children are comfortable with the staff; they love to curl up in the book corner and listen to stories, or sit at the computer talking about what they are doing and receiving praise for completing the programme, or waiting nicely to take their turn. Children's individual needs and interests are identified and recorded when the children first start at the group. Starting points are clearly recorded and cover all areas of learning. Staff undertake observations and assessments of the children, which are recorded in their Learning Story. They offer opportunities that build on children's known skills and identify areas where children need to focus to move forward. These focus areas are included in future planning, but it is not always clear in the written plans who an activity is aimed at, or why.

The resources are organised into accessible areas including the imaginative play area, the book/quiet area, messy play, the number area, construction and the computer. Children are able to make decisions about what they want to play with, as well as taking part in some adult led activities. Children are able to access the computer easily and this is a favourite activity. They are very competent and show good understanding and excellent mouse skills. They use their imaginations well; they negotiate their roles when playing together in the home corner. Older and more able children help younger ones when they are doing jigsaw puzzles, showing them how to fit the pieces together or explaining about the straight edge pieces.

Children have free access to an outdoor play area which they love. They build with the large construction, ride on the seesaws, take their babies for a walk in the buggies or have a bug hunt. Several boys are thoroughly engrossed in looking for insects; they find some slugs and snails in the garden, which they pick up to study. Staff find a small tank to put them into so they can study them closer. They eventually put the tank on the nature table next to the tank with the tadpoles. They return regularly to check on them. Children are learning at first hand about nature and the world around them. Children learn about equality and diversity through all the families who attend; they share information about their cultures and introduce the children to different languages. The families attending come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is being developed in many ways.

Children are introduced to healthy eating options at the milk bar. They are offered a selection of foods and are able to serve themselves, pouring their drinks and spreading their toppings on their toast. However good hygiene procedures are not being fully enforced by staff as they do not notice when children lick their knife, then put it back into the butter, cheese spread or jam, only to lick it again and repeat the process. Children are encouraged to become independent by taking themselves to the toilet, washing their hands before eating and clearing their plate

and cup away after their snack.

Effective behaviour management procedures ensure that children are learning to develop responsibility for their actions. They play cooperatively together and respond well to praise and encouragement. This gives them the incentive to do well as they develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Any concerns over behaviour are discussed with parents and any other professionals who are involved in the care of the children, and strategies are set in place to meet their individual needs. Staff are good role models to the children; they are always calm, polite and encourage the children in all they do. Overall, an inclusive and welcoming service is provided.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met