

St Johns Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	322041
Inspection date	04 May 2007
Inspector	Dawn Lumb
Setting Address	St John's Parish Centre, Wentworth Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 2QU
Telephone number	01924 780679
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Registered person	St John's Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

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 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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St John's Pre-School is accommodated in St John's Parish Centre in the Wentworth area of Wakefield. The pre-school is well established and is managed by a voluntary committee. They have been registered since approximately 1971. The pre-school provides sessional care and education for children aged two to five years. The children who attend are primarily from the local community.

The accommodation consists of one main playroom with toilet, and storage facilities adjacent with access to a fully enclosed play area, directly off the playroom. The pre-school occasionally makes use of an upstairs room within the parish centre; this is generally used for children attending the lunch club. A kitchen and hall on the first floor is also used for the children to access short planned activities.

There are 33 children on roll, of which 24 are funded. The pre-school provides support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children attending who have dual language.

The group operates in term time only Monday to Friday. Sessions are from 09.15 until 11.40 and Monday to Thursday between 12.30 and 14.55 hours.

There are seven members of staff in total, three of which are classed as relief cover staff. All members of staff have appropriate childcare qualifications. This includes one with NVQ level four, five with NVQ level three, one with NVQ level one and two working towards a Foundation Degree. The group receives regular support from the local authority and the reception teacher from the local school. It is affiliated to the Pre School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are provided with an environment which is adequately clean and maintained. Effective methods ensure children develop good personal hygiene practice. For example, children wash their hands after using compost to plant seeds. Adequate nappy changing procedures ensure young children are comfortable.

Children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise. They use the outdoor play area on a regular basis and they benefit from weekly walks to their allotment. Children constantly test their physical skills, through very well planned activities which are provided by dedicated staff that enthusiastically join in their games. They confidently use a wide variety of large and small equipment and develop good body control. Children use tools and equipment to manoeuvre and manipulate different consistencies of soft materials. For example, when they use the spades to good effect to plant seeds and fill their plant pots with compost. Children learn very well about healthy eating when they help to prepare snacks; through taster sessions and the promotion of five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. Members of staff promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle and hygiene through extremely well planned topics and simple explanations.

Children are provided with drinks on a regular basis. Members of staff work very closely with parents, to ensure children's individual dietary needs are well met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for safely and securely in a building which presents many challenges. There are steps, slopes and hidden areas. However these are well managed by a vigilant staff team. The care room is organised effectively to ensure the differing ages and developmental stages of children are met. Children confidently and independently move around the various areas. They are provided with an excellent range of toys and equipment which are safe, suitable and well maintained. They develop a good awareness of their own personal safety, as practitioners encourage and help them to learn how to use toys and equipment safely. For example, they use sit and ride toys appropriately and they play within agreed boundaries. Very effective strategies are used so that the children can self monitor their participation in activities in order that they do not become overcrowded and unsafe. For example, an egg timer is used to ensure that they take turns, play effectively and self restrict the numbers. Children are able to play in an environment kept safe by knowledgeable adults, who recognise the balance between freedom and risk.

Effective security systems and procedures ensure children are kept safe. For example, entrance doors are locked and parents ring the doorbells to gain entry, all visitors to the setting are recorded. Members of staff are able to protect children through high ratios, vigilant, consistent

monitoring and close observation. Children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised and unauthorised people are unable to enter freely. For example, there are clear procedures to ensure children are collected only by authorised people.

Management are clear in their procedures, which enables them to employ staff that are appropriately vetted with relevant experience, knowledge and skills in caring for children. Practitioners have secure knowledge of what to do in the event of a child protection concern or allegation.

Good systems, high levels of awareness and well trained staff ensure the children and areas are kept safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are highly motivated and interested in a broad, excellent range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor activities. These provide excellent levels of challenge appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children's care and learning are effectively promoted, because of small group activities, which ensure individual needs are exceptionally well met.

Children begin to make sense of their knowledge, experience and events, through extremely well planned, imaginative and creative activities. Staff sensitively support and encourage children, they allow them time to experiment. For example, they develop an understanding of consistency as they pour more water into the compost and add sand, stones and other items. Children develop their thoughts and understanding, as they talk to peers and staff who introduce new words to extend and enrich their vocabulary.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They use a variety of very good teaching methods for both three and four year olds; there is a strong emphasis on developing language skills, with increasing opportunities for children to discuss their learning. Practitioners provide realistic challenge for all, which leads to children making very good progress in their learning. Teaching is well organised to develop children's basic skills and to build upon these. Children are highly motivated, interested and enjoy their time at pre-school. They have good opportunities to make choices about their play and learning. Relationships between children and staff are very good.

The planning is very effective, shared and understood by all the staff in the setting. This practice allows for continuous provision which extends children's learning by providing them with excellent opportunities to practice and refine their skills. Plans successfully include an exceptional range of activities and experiences both indoor and outdoor to help children progress towards the early learning goals. Very strong emphasis on practical activities enriches and adds great enjoyment to the curriculum. Increasingly, children are gaining an understanding of a healthy lifestyle and keeping safe. Staff are very knowledgeable about children's achievements, there are detailed assessment and monitoring systems which are easy to follow and are understood by all. These support staff to constantly make full use of all that is known about children's progress when setting tasks to identify and promote the next steps of children's learning.

Three and four year old children communicate confidently; they enthusiastically share their experiences with the staff and other children. Children recognise and name letters of the alphabet, know letter sounds and write for a purpose. They confidently write their names on labels, draw, design and write notices to use in the pre-school. Children know and recognise their name mats as they self register at snack time. They confidently share their knowledge with their peers. For example, one child says, 'I'll show you how to do an S because my dad's got an S in his name'. Children recall and retell events to good effect with expression and feeling. Stories are told about a mum going into hospital. Children explain the growth and development of frog spawn and they talk about planting seeds and what they need to grow.

Children confidently count up to five and beyond ten, recognise numbers and use number vocabulary in activities. For example, one child explains that she does the edges of the jigsaw first. Another child says, 'I'm going to be four and I'll have four candles on my cake, when I was two I had short hair.' They develop a good awareness and use vocabulary to describe time and events. For example, they are beginning to sequence the days of the week and months of the year. They confidently compare size, shape and position in planned topics and every day activities. For example, they grow flowers and plants in the garden, measure them and discuss their growing progress. They talk about the height and length of plants and they use a microscope to investigate their structure. Children use simple graphs to record their findings. They identify and record which fruits they like best.

Children relish the rich range of opportunities they have and enthusiastically explore and investigate stimulating sensory activities and resources on a daily basis. Children learn about the wider world through topics, visits and outings. They use everyday activities to strengthen this knowledge. They enthusiastically join together to create an ambulance from box construction and they use technological toys and equipment such as a telephone and checkout till in topic work and every day play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The stimulating and colourful environment, with a strong emphasis on the children's art work, nurtures children's aesthetic awareness and their sense of belonging particularly well. Children of all ages, play an active part in the setting. Children develop very positive attitudes to learning and thoroughly enjoy going to the pre-school. Children's care and learning is enhanced by effective and efficient organisation. Excellent key worker systems ensure parent's views about their child's needs are actively sought before the child starts at the setting, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. Children are highly valued, respected and well cared for through a very effective monitoring and assessment system, which allows the individual needs of each child to be very well met. Staff are very aware of and support young children's development through planning, which is firmly linked to the Birth to three matters framework, alongside thoughtful interaction and very good nurturing skills.

Children's independence is very successfully promoted. For example, they independently access the toilets and remember to wash their hands with very little prompting. They successfully peel their own oranges at snack time and use the water butt tap to fill their watering cans. Children and staff make good use of snack time to promote their social interaction. They help each other to cut up and prepare food and develop an understanding of how to share and care for others. Children readily join together and older and more able children show very good levels of tolerance and consideration in supporting others. For example, children help others to undo the sticky tape, hold it and cut it to the right length.

The positive attitudes of staff, ensures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children's behaviour is very good and praise is given freely, ensuring that they develop confidence, self esteem and understand when they have done well. Artistic displays provide a stimulating learning environment and celebrate children's efforts. Exceptionally well planned activities help to promote children's very good awareness of diversity, such as exploring different festivals. Children learn well about the local environment, the people and places within, as they visit the allotment, church and shops.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and contributes significantly to the children's well being. Children benefit from a very effective key worker system which successfully promotes information sharing and communication with parents. They are kept well informed of their child's progress and intended learning through informal verbal exchanges and more formal information sharing sessions. Coffee mornings are held to give parents the opportunity to see their child's profiles and review individual development and learning plans. The Foundation Stage curriculum is available and explained to parents. Parents are made aware of the various play areas and activities and their links to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Management and staff actively encourage parents to become involved in helping their child learn and share their knowledge of the child's skills. For example, they participate in rota days; visits to the church and allotments. The manager and staff are proactive towards inclusion; they positively and sensitively support children. For example, some staff have learnt basic Urdu to help support parents and children with a second language.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

High ratios and effective practice enables staff to consistently interact with children, offer sensitive support and lots of encouragement. Staff know the children well, they are closely monitored and children's profiles and play plans identify achievements and support further progress.

Staff are fully committed to training and developing their skills and knowledge of childcare and education. Knowledge gleaned from training and other professionals is enthusiastically put into practice. Children are highly motivated, because they are interested and have excellent opportunities to make choices about their play and learning.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. The manager has a clear vision for the nursery education with a strong focus on the personal development and achievements of all the children. This focus ensures all learners are valued equally. The manager works closely with the staff to give effective direction for the welfare, care and learning of the children. They enthusiastically seek and welcome other professionals for support and guidance to help monitor and evaluate the service offered and to successfully promote inclusion. The manager effectively supports staff in identifying training needs and encourages them to continue their personal development.

Management and staff work very effectively in building a committed team. They are constantly seeking to provide a high standard of care and education and to develop the provision. The manager knows the staff's strengths and utilises these well within the pre-school. All staff are involved in the planning. They are adept in implementing the curriculum to successfully help children achieve positive outcomes in the six areas of learning. The environment is extremely well organised and successfully supports identified areas of learning; there is effective deployment of staff, resources, equipment and space. Policies and procedures are of a high

standard. All documentation necessary for the efficient and safe management of the provision and the welfare, care and learning of the children is very well maintained.

The nursery constantly evaluates the provision, through parents information and feedback, regular staff meetings and through links to other professionals and agencies. Management and staff are committed to providing a high quality service for all the children who attend.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was required to address issues relating to recording and documentation. The provider now has a detailed register reflecting the staff's attendance; the compliments and complaints procedure now includes the regulators contact details in full and is available for parents to access on the notice board; the child protection policy has been extended. These promote the children's welfare and safety.

The provider was also required to address the opportunities to challenge three and four year old children to consolidate and refine skills in construction and building with large pieces of equipment, objects and materials; to improve systems for monitoring and managing staffs professional development. These have been undertaken and the outside area has crates, stones and wooden pieces to stimulate and encourage children's participation; ongoing meetings with staff identify training needs and promote professional development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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.

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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):

- continue to monitor safety for children within the challenging environment.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk