

St Michaels Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	110276
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Lynne Elizabeth Lewington
Setting Address	258 Lower Farnham Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 3RB
Telephone number	01252 337687
E-mail	
Registered person	St Michaels 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Michael's Pre-school is managed by a voluntary committee and opened in 1996. It operates from within a church hall in Aldershot and children from the local community attend. There is an enclosed outside play area. The pre-school is open term time only. Morning sessions are from 09:15 until 11:45, Monday to Friday. There are some afternoon sessions from 12:30 until 15:00. Children attend a variety of sessions.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children aged between two and five years. There are currently 46 children on roll and of these there are 36 children who receive funding for nursery education. It is the pre-school's policy to accept children from two years nine months. The pre-school supports children with additional needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs nine staff. There are six who hold appropriate early years qualifications and one who is working towards a relevant qualification. The pre-school receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children experience excellent opportunities to develop their awareness of how to live healthily. Each day they have good quality opportunities to develop their physical skills both indoors and out. They dress up appropriately to play in the rain, enjoying the puddles and the opportunity to run and shout outdoors. Indoors they use the climbing frame confidently and use a range of tools which encourage their finer movements.

Staff diligently ensure that the premises are spotlessly clean ensuring the children play in a clean, fresh and hygienic environment. Children learn the importance of washing their hands after toileting and they competently clean their hands with hand wipes before enjoying their snack. Detailed information about each child is gathered from parents ensuring that all allergies or health issues are clearly understood and managed appropriately. Clear policies regarding sickness, first aid qualified staff and detailed record keeping ensure that children's health is promoted effectively within the setting. Children are developing an awareness of a healthy lifestyle through the interesting activities they undertake within the setting. They learn about their bodies, what clothes to wear in different weathers and about healthy eating.

Planned activities help the children to develop their understanding of healthy eating. This learning is reinforced as the children contribute a healthy item of food each day for snack time. The food is prepared and shared between the group enabling the children to make choices and taste different items. This enjoyable, sociable snack time enables the children to talk in small groups with an adult, providing a nurturing relaxing interlude to the busy session. Children learn to independently pour their water or juice with increasing confidence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children play and learn in an environment where excellent care is taken to promote their safety and welfare. Staff undertake comprehensive risk assessments of the play environment and take suitable measures to manage any risks appropriately. For example, the accident records are used to inform the risk assessments, ensuring that potential hazards are highlighted and dealt with. Children are secure in the play environment enabling them to move freely around developing their independence. Regular fire drills ensure the children and staff can evacuate the premises safely and swiftly if the need arises. Children are developing their awareness of safe behaviour as they move around the setting and learn how to behave appropriately when they evacuate the premises.

Excellent use of all the available space provides the children with a fun interesting learning environment. Good consideration is evident in the planning of the playroom providing the children with areas for their quiet and busy activity. For example, a large carpeted area of floor space is used for construction toys enabling train tracks and buildings to be made without disturbing other activities. The careful consideration given to the outside area has led to an interesting fun outdoor play environment, where children can grow items, take an interest in their environment and use trikes and balls freely. The good quality resources are stored enabling children to make choices in their play and access their toys easily.

Children's welfare is safeguarded very effectively because staff and parents are aware of the setting's duty to report child protection concerns. Clear detailed information is displayed on the notice board and a clear child protection policy is available. Staff undertake training opportunities and show an awareness of the action they would take if they were concerned about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff greet children warmly as they arrive enabling children to feel valued and important, consequently most enter the setting confidently. Key workers maintain development records for each child and encourage parents to share information about their children's development enabling a clear record of progress to be maintained. Children learn to undertake their personal tasks with increasing independence for example, taking themselves to the toilet and learning to put on their own coats.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Plans indicate the children undertake a wide range of activities which encourage their understanding and interests. Children make choices throughout the session in their play as they freely move between the activities. All staff participate in planning the play sessions. Plans indicate how staff and parents can encourage children's development in each area of learning. However, the activities are not always evaluated consistently to ensure they are meeting their learning objectives. Children's developmental needs are carefully recorded and used to inform the planning of future activities.

Children are developing their awareness of the written word as they learn to recognise their names when they enter the setting and at snack time. Displays and labels encourage children to see written words. They competently use pencils and crayons; drawing and making marks for a variety of purposes. Good quality books are always easily available to the children in the quiet area where they sit comfortably to enjoy stories.

Children have good opportunities to develop their awareness of size, shape and position as they undertake activities. For example, they make long rows of cars and refer to the front and back of the line, some talk about and make fat, thin, flat and round dough shapes demonstrating their increasing awareness. However, children have few opportunities to count and associate numerals with quantity.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to develop their creative skills as they use paint, glue, glitter and dough. They act out their life events and fantasies as they play in the home corner. Many are busy cooking dinner, pouring drinks and stirring pots, some make their own very loud music with saucepans and batons. Children enjoy opportunities to sing as a group. They remember the words and undertake actions in time to the music, increasing their abilities to express themselves enjoyably.

Children learn about the world around them as they play in the open air, increasing the use of their senses and developing an awareness of the weather and the changing seasons. Planning indicates they have opportunities to learn about their bodies, planets and the living world. Children use tape recorders/players and a computer enabling them to develop their knowledge of technology.

Children help to tidy up the setting; some remind others to help showing their growing awareness of working together. Many are familiar with the routine, it helps to make them feel secure because they know what will happen next. Staff delegate important tasks to the children such as laying the table for snack and 'tidy up inspector'. Children enjoy the feeling of responsibility and undertake the tasks diligently. A certificate rewards them for their efforts and increases the children's self esteem. These simple tasks enable the children to feel important valued members of the group.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Good care is taken to ensure all children and their families are made welcome. Children undertake activities in the local community and visitors to the setting enable the children to develop their awareness of the community in which they live. For example, they take part in the local annual Victoria Day parade, enjoying the opportunity to dress up for the occasion. Parents are actively involved and encouraged to share their culture and faith in the setting enabling children to develop their awareness and understanding of our diverse society. Resources reflect the community and they use books in other languages on occasions to encourage children who speak English as an additional language. Children's individual learning needs are met very well due to the staff team's ability to work sensitively with parents and other agencies in order to promote every child's progress.

Staff speak warmly and kindly to the children developing good relationships, and setting a good example to them. They praise children for their efforts and encourage them to help each other. Children are encouraged to share and take turns and use good manners as they undertake their activities. Generally children behave very well, although at times the staff do not remind children clearly of the impact of their behaviour on others.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents speak very highly of the friendly and welcoming atmosphere. They share important quality information about their children enabling the staff to develop a good understanding of the child. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through formal meetings and informal conversations. Daily activity plans inform them of the activities children undertake and suggest ways they can develop the learning at home. They can also borrow books to read with their children at home. Parents are made very welcome, staff recognising the importance of developing good working relationships. Every parent is encouraged to participate in a small way enabling them to feel some ownership of the service provided. They help on the committee, fund raise, collect items and help in the setting. Comprehensive information is available to parents in the entrance to the setting ensuring they are well informed.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management are outstanding. The excellent organisation of the setting enables the children to be cared for in a safe, healthy and happy environment. Staff experience regular opportunities to undertake training, plan and discuss their work enabling them to work together to provide a caring and educational environment for the young children in their care. A comprehensive induction enables new staff to understand their role, and staff appraisals ensure that they develop their practice and interests.

The manager has a clear awareness of the setting's strengths and weaknesses. She encourages the staff, the committee and the chairperson's support of the setting to help ensure that relevant requirements of registration are met and a good quality service is offered. Policies and documentation are reviewed to ensure they meet current requirements and parents are kept very well informed of how the setting works and what their children do. All the relevant documentation is maintained in excellent order and contains all the required information to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. Space and resources are used very effectively to promote the children's care and education. Therefore, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection two recommendations were made. Firstly to ensure healthy snacks are offered and secondly to keep an attendance record of visitors. Children now bring a donation of fruit or vegetables at snack time which is shared between the group ensuring the children have a healthy snack. A visitors' book is available and used by all visitors on arrival at the setting, ensuring a clear record of all persons on the premises is maintained.

Complaints since the last inspection

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):

- encourage children to think about the effect of their actions on others

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- improve opportunities for children to see numerals and use numbers and quantity in their activities
- ensure clear evaluation of activities is undertaken to ensure they are meeting learning objectives and inform 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 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk