



St Helen's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY306172
Inspection date	13 December 2005
Inspector	Kay Roberts
Setting Address	Jubilee Hall, Greenhill, Alveston, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, BS35 2QX
Telephone number	01454 412493 Hall
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Registered person	St Helen'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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Helen's Pre-School first opened as a playgroup in 1991 and at that time was located in the grounds of St Helen's School. In 2005 they re-registered when they moved to their current premises in Jubilee Hall, Alveston, which is opposite St Helen's School. Children have access to the main hall, a side room and a designated, fully enclosed outside play space. The pre-school serves the local area.

The group operate Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 09.15

hours to 11.45 hours. On Monday and Friday the session also includes a lunch club which runs from 11.45 until 12.30 hours. There is a Wednesday afternoon session for children of 3 years plus from 12.45 until 15.15 hours. On a Tuesday and Friday afternoon there are sessions for children from 2 years 6 months to 3-years, which run from 13.30 to 15.15 hours. Registration is for a maximum of 26 children and there are currently 30 children on roll. There are 15 funded 4-year-olds and 6 funded 3-year olds. The setting welcomes children with English as an additional language and special educational needs.

There are six members of staff, five of whom hold a relevant child care qualification. At each session there are four members of staff, who on occasions are supported by a parent assistant. St Helen's Pre-School is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. Advice on the educational programme is provided by the Early Years and Development Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of cleanliness as they play in a clean environment and observe staff wiping the tables before and after snack. Occasionally children enjoy helping, wiping over tables and cupboards with a damp cloth. Children know that they must wash their hands thoroughly after craft activities and before snack. Occasional visits from health professionals such as a dental hygienist, reinforce the importance of good personal hygiene. The risk of children becoming ill is minimised through effective procedures and sharing the policy for excluding children who are sick with parents. Children's medical needs are appropriately met as staff follow the guidance provided by parents and seek appropriate training. In the event of an accident children's welfare is promoted as some staff are trained to administer first aid and parental consent has been obtained to seek medical advice or treatment in the event of an emergency. However, not all accidents are signed by parents.

Children play outdoors on a daily basis. They are protected from the elements as they know that they should wear a coat and gloves if it is cold. In the summer they do not get sun burnt as sun block, provided by parents, is applied and children wear sun hats. Outdoors children develop large muscle skills as they kick balls and jump between hoops. Indoors children participate in music and movement. However, opportunities to further extend large muscle skills, particularly for more able children, are limited. The only equipment to encourage children to travel around, under, over or through, to climb or scramble is a small slide.

Snack and lunch times are a social occasion when children and staff sit together. At snack time children show independence as they confidently choose from a large selection of well presented fruit. Children do not become hungry as they are able to have more fruit once they have finished eating what is on their plate. Milk or water are available to drink. At lunch time children and staff talk about the contents of their lunch boxes. On the day of the inspection this was not followed through with discussion about healthy eating, although this does happen on other occasions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome at St Helen's Pre-School as they receive a personal greeting from staff as they enter the premises. They are proud of their photographs displayed at child height throughout the hall and look at them with interest. The child-focussed, calm environment with Christmas carols playing quietly in the background helps children relax. The table cloth near the entrance has pictures drawn by children who left in summer 2005. Child sized furniture is organised so there is space for children to move freely between activities and to play undisturbed by peers. An extensive range of well presented activities, covering all areas of learning, await children's arrival. Each activity has a good range of materials, for example the post office included various sized envelopes, paper, diary, pens, cash register, money, receipts, cash register, stickers and sticky tape.

Children play in a safe, secure environment. There is a thorough risk assessment in place and potential hazards, such as the temperature of the radiators have been addressed by putting furniture in front of them, so they are not accessible to children. Staff are vigilant about children's safety, for example as soon as water is spilt on the floor, they mop it up. Children are further protected as staff have a good knowledge of local child protection procedures.

Children are encouraged to protect themselves by saying "no" to something they do not like. They know how to evacuate the premises in the event of a fire, as they practise fire drills on a regular basis. Prior to going on outings children are encouraged to say how they must keep themselves safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children new to the group settle quickly as each child is allocated a key worker before they start. The key worker offers support on an individual basis to help children during the transition. Most children start the pre-school by attending the sessions specifically for children under 3-years, which are shorter in duration and are less busy because there are only a few children. These sessions are well planned using Birth to three matters.

Children know the pre-school routine. After confidently entering the premises and selecting their name card they sit down for register. They are curious and on seeing the decorations on the tree took them off to look closer when they thought no one was looking. They explore what happens when they mix different colour paint together. At the snow scene they feel the texture of the shaving foam and cotton wool, sometimes using the cotton wool to spread the foam over the scene. Two children in the area play alongside each other and become involved in an imaginary world. They move the heavy construction vehicles over the hills and into the tunnels. One child pretends to use a digger to move the snow. Small figures are moved around the scene and up the steps to the site office. Later, one child says her figure is the mummy and the second child responds by wrapping up another figure, the

baby, in cotton wool.

Children participate in many activities which develop fine muscle skills and independence. Once they have finished a painting they hang it on a clothes horse using pegs. When playing with the dough they roll it in their hands and use cutters, saying what they are going to make before they begin. As children make models from recycled waste they decide whether to use glue or sticky tape. Some children select boxes which they wrap in paper for Christmas presents. With assistance from staff they cut out a label and write who it is for, before putting it under the Christmas tree. Children are creative, they make individual Christmas pictures, cards and tree decorations as they select from a good range of resources, such as crayons, stickers, Christmas pictures and glitter. They show good concentration as they decorate a pre-cut angel by placing stickers neatly in place to create hair and facial features. These activities develop children's confidence in using simple tools as they use a tape dispenser, scissors and hole punch.

Children are sociable, they seek out the company of adults and request that they play with them. They enjoy the companionship of their peers and talk about life at home. They have good communication skills and as they write letters to family and friends, they talk about a relative who lives abroad. In a large group children participate in action rhymes such as 'Peter Plays with One Hammer'. Children are interested in the stories which are well supported with visual aids and as they listen to the story of the three wise men visiting Jesus, they understand what presents were given to baby Jesus as they are shown examples and given an explanation.

Children are keen to learn and attempt things for themselves as staff allow time and offer lots of praise for their achievements. Staff extend learning by asking questions. However, this is not consistent and there are many missed opportunities, for example when wrapping presents children were not encouraged to think about colour, shape or size of the presents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff undertake regular observations of children. However, as the system for monitoring progress is still in its infancy these have not yet been used effectively to show children's current stage of development or progress made within the setting. Consequently planning is not based on children's individual needs and does not include special considerations or extensions for more able children. Although planning covers all areas of learning they are not equally weighted, and little emphasis is placed on mathematical development. During the inspection only one member of staff encouraged children to use numbers. In Santa's workshop the member of staff asked how much goods cost, but other opportunities were lost, such as counting the total number of children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel special as they are personally welcomed into the setting. Individual needs are met as staff listen to what children say and respond to their interests, such

as participating in a game. When one child asked for a chair, one was promptly provided by a member of staff, who asked where the seat should be positioned. However, on occasions children may feel uneasy when they overhear staff not always being respectful when talking about private matters. Staff sensitively meet children's special needs well by working in close partnership with parents. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has experience in this field and is enthusiastic about her remit.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered. They are well behaved and polite, the importance of which is reiterated in a short 'Please and Thank you' rhyme. Children show respect for their environment by assisting in tidying up. Care and consideration is shown as children pass glue brushes to each other and explain which way the dough cutters should be used. They are encouraged to appreciate nature as they go on nature walks to look at the shape of leaves and trees. When out on walks they develop an understanding of the local community. They visit the post office and shop and attend the church for harvest festival. Occasionally the head teacher from the primary school reads a story to the children. Children learn about the diverse society in which we live as they acknowledge a range of cultural festivals and staff respond positively to children's questions about difference.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents comment positively about the provision. They are well informed about practices within the setting as they receive a detailed prospectus and are regularly updated via the notice board and letters. A member of staff is always available to listen to what parents have to say and when working as an assistant during sessions parents feel fully involved. Assisting at sessions provides a good opportunity for parents to be involved in their child's learning. This is further encouraged through the library and parents knowing what activities are available on a daily basis, so that these can be followed up later. Although parents are actively encouraged to share what they know about their child when they start at the pre-school, to date staff have not been able to keep parents informed of children's progress against the curriculum as monitoring is not yet fully developed.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care. There is a clear operational plan and key committee members, staff and parents assisting at sessions are clear about their remit. Children receive a high level of support as there are always four members of staff at each session, even when the number of children present is low. Staff play with children and encourage them to develop self-esteem. Children are actively occupied throughout the session as they are enthusiastic about the activities and are entertained with singing rhymes during waiting periods. Documentation which complies with the requirements of the National Standards, is well organised, confidentially maintained and with the exception of some accidents is shared with parents. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. At present all parents, committee members and staff are working towards one goal; they are to

purchase new premises which will be located in the grounds of the local primary school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are rigorous recruitment procedures in place and induction is thorough. The leader is suitably qualified and has many years of experience. Staff are encouraged to pursue further training and since September 2005 have attended five courses on different subjects. The manager has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the setting. She views the dedication of staff as a benefit and recognises that children's records need to be up to date in order to make planning more specific to the needs of the children within the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received a concern on 21 April 2005; that educational standards have declined in their new premises; less homework was sent home; and that resources were limited apart from when Ofsted inspected. This relates to National Standard 3, Care Learning and Play and Standard 5, Equipment.

An inspector made a visit on 13 May 2005 to investigate. The group had only been given one days notice to move from their old building. They had put a lot of energy into establishing themselves in another setting. The inspector had a detailed discussion about this and made observations. Some children's work was being retained for their profile books to show parents at the end of term.

Ofsted were satisfied that they are meeting the National Standards and remain qualified for registration.

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):

- ensure all accident records are signed by parents.

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):

- extend physical development by providing more opportunities for children to develop large muscle skills by travelling around, under, over and through equipment, and to climb and scramble.
- develop an effective planning cycle based on children's individual needs which focuses more equitably on all areas of the curriculum, particularly Mathematical Development and ensure that staff take all opportunities to extend learning.
- improve the partnership with parents by developing a system for sharing children's progress records and ensure confidential discussions are not held in front of children.

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