

St James's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137349
Inspection date	11 May 2007
Inspector	Susan Linda Capon
Setting Address	St James Church Hall, 283 Crescent Drive, Petts Wood, Kent, BR5 1HJ
Telephone number	01689 826799 07815 464837
E-mail	
Registered person	St James'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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St James's Pre-School has been open since 1983. The group is managed by St. James's Pre-school Parent Management Committee, who employ a manager for the day to day running of the group. The pre-school operates from two halls with associated toilet and kitchen facilities in St. James the Great Roman Catholic Church. There is a secure outdoor area. The church is situated in the London Borough of Bromley.

A maximum of 32 children aged between two and under five years may attend at any one time. The pre-school operates term time only from 09.00 to 12.00 each weekday.

There are currently 39 children on roll. Of these, 32 receive funding for nursery education. Children may attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports some children with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

The group employs seven members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, one has a childcare qualification to NVQ4, two staff have a recognised childcare qualification equivalent to NVQ3 and one staff member has an NVQ2. There are two staff currently working towards NVQ2.

The pre-school receives support from the local Early Years team and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are free from infection and cross-contamination as they use good hygiene routines throughout each session. They wash their hands before eating and cover their mouth when they cough. Older children blow their nose on a tissue, placing it in the covered bin. They are aware this helps to prevent spreading germs.

Staff use good cleaning routines to provide a clean environment for the children. They clean the toilets with bleach prior to the children's arrival and use anti-bacterial spray to clean down the tables before snacks. Children help staff to sieve the sand dropped onto the floor before re-placing it in the sand-tray, preventing the spread of infection.

The sound procedures for accident and medication management protect the children at all times. First aid qualified staff are always on site and the pre-school leader has a nursing qualification. Two members of staff are trained to administer an epipen if required. Staff are fully aware of any specific allergies or special medical needs. They ensure they gather as much information about managing any situation as possible. Staff complete detailed records of all medication administered and accidents. Parents see the records.

Parents are aware they must not send a sick child to the group to help prevent the spread of infection. Staff follow good procedures for managing the situation of a child becoming unwell when attending the group.

Children are developing a good understanding of the importance of keeping themselves healthy through the topics, activities and discussions with staff. They all enjoy regular physical exercise outdoors whenever possible, playing on the large climbing apparatus, bikes and scooters. The children enjoy watering the tomato and carrot plants and watching them grow. At snack time they enjoy fresh fruit.

Children freely access fresh drinking water throughout the session. They know they must use a clean beaker to prevent spreading germs.

Children enjoy the social occasion at snack-time as they sit together with their key worker and other children. They are fully involved in this activity as they help to hand out the beakers, pour their own drinks and pass round the plate of fruit or biscuits. All staff ensure children receive suitable food and drink to meet their individual dietary needs. For example, some children enjoy different biscuits as they are unable to have any dairy products.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children spend their time in a pleasant environment. Staff work hard to make the premises warm and welcoming to the children and their parents. They set up the rooms each day. Staff make the premises their own as they display the children's work and add posters relating to learning around the rooms.

Children move around the premises freely as the tables and activities are well-organised with sufficient space between each area to prevent accidents. During the session staff offer suitable areas for the children for playing, eating, resting and outdoor activities. The small outdoor play space is utilised well by splitting the children into small groups. This ensures they have sufficient space to move around and ride the bikes and cars without colliding with one another.

Children access a good range of toys and equipment each session. Some additional equipment is readily available on low shelving, enabling children to make other choices during the morning. Staff ensure all toys and equipment are clean, suitable and safe for the children to use.

Children play in a safe, secure environment. Staff check the premises are safe prior to the children's arrival. They monitor the premises well once the children have arrived. Staff cover each other well during the session informing one another when they take children to the toilet or manage an accident. All visitors are required to sign in and show their ID if appropriate. They are not left alone with the children. For example, children having their photograph taken today were with a staff member or their parents to ensure their safety.

Staff follow good fire safety procedures, ensuring everyone is aware of their individual role and responsibilities. All required equipment is in place and regular practice fire drills are undertaken each half term. These cover the whole week to ensure all children attending are included. Staff record when a fire drill has taken place. However, no additional information is completed which could inform staff of any considerations for the future. Arrangements are in place for the group to use another premises in an emergency, ensuring the children's safety at all times.

Children are safe and secure when they travel off site. Staff and parents accompany the children to the local shops or Jubilee Park. The children also enjoy a coach trip to Christmas Tree Farm during the summer term.

Staff are knowledgeable on managing child protection issues. They are very aware of their role and responsibilities regarding the children's safety and protection at all times. Staff have access to the local procedures if they require help or advice. All parents are fully aware of the group's policy and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy attending the pre-school entering with anticipation each morning. They quickly separate from their parents to select an activity of their choice. The children develop confidence as they independently pour their own drinks and put on their own shoes or coats to go outdoors.

Children benefit from the staffs knowledge of child development, the early learning goals and stepping stones. Staff support the children's learning and development through the "learn through play" approach. They are fully aware of the Birth to three matters framework, incorporating this into the day to day planning when required.

Staff usually group the children appropriately throughout the session. They continue to review registration and snack-time to identify the best arrangements to meet all the children's needs. For example, splitting the group into smaller groups to prevent younger children sitting for inappropriately long periods of time.

Staff provide children with a balanced programme of activities, enabling them to develop their all-round skills. They use a tree of learning to display positive information about each child to build each child's self-esteem. For example, they record good listening skills or being helpful when tidying up.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

All the children are confident in the setting. They enjoy talking to one another and sharing information in larger groups at snack-time. Many are able to concentrate for long periods of time without adult support. For example, at the puzzle table and sand play. Staff provide children with good opportunities to develop their feelings using the special cushions to identify when they are happy, sad or angry. This particularly helps children with behavioural problems to manage their anger appropriately. All the children are aware of the rules and happily use the timer for sharing the outdoor equipment. Staff ensure children are developing a good awareness of their own and other cultures and beliefs. This helps the children to respect one another and the staff team.

Children are developing good language skills. They are able to negotiate sharing the toys with one another. Children use good vocabulary and sentence construction making themselves understood. For example, two children discussed the different colours in a rainbow when they were drawing. All the children enjoy looking at books and use them appropriately. They enjoy re-telling their favourite stories using the correct sequence of events. For example, one child related the book "Scared of the Bear". All the children sing along to their favourite songs particularly enjoying "One finger, one thumb". Some children have a good awareness of the sounds of the letters in their name and can name other objects, starting with the same sound. Many children can write their own name using recognisable letters as they enjoy regular opportunities to practise this throughout the group activities. Some children have written captions to their pictures. For example, one child has captioned her picture of a hedgehog.

Most of the children recognise the numbers one to ten and can count to twenty and above. Children enjoy matching the bears sorting them into big, small and medium sizes. They enjoy using the bears to make patterns. Children competently compare numbers. For example, they know that eight pegs are two less than ten. Children enjoy using the bricks to measure themselves and other children. They discuss who is the smallest and biggest. All the children recognise a wide range of different shapes and can match these appropriately to complete a maths puzzle. They are learning positional language as they use the large play apparatus and line up to go outdoors.

All the children enjoy investigating changes in materials as they cook mince pies or add water to the sand. They enjoy planting seeds and know they need water to grow. The children were particularly interested in the photographer and her equipment as they watched her set it up for their photographs. They competently build with a wide range of construction materials particularly enjoying junk modelling and woodwork activities. Staff make the most of natural opportunities taking the children outdoors to explore the snow in the winter. Children access a good range of electronic equipment and toys particularly developing competence with the computer mouse to use the painting programme. They are developing an awareness of time as staff use the hall clock to demonstrate it is time to go home.

All the children move around the premises confidently and safely. They have good spatial awareness and know they should avoid one another when they drive the cars. Children are developing good co-ordination skills as they pedal a bike and scoot a scooter. They use a broad range of equipment to develop their large and small muscles as they competently cut out a ladybird with the scissors or fill the buckets with sand. They handle pencils and paint brushes competently and use a hammer without hitting their thumbs.

The children enjoy regular opportunities to develop their creativity. They enjoy exploring sand, water, dough and paint as they play. All the children enjoy singing songs and rhymes with some singing along as they play together. For example, two children sang "its raining, it's pouring, as they played with the dolls. The children enjoy exploring music as they use a wide range of musical instruments. They enjoy moving around the room to the rhythm of the ocean drum and its changing beat. The children use their imagination as they role play in the home corner and create their own pictures and models.

Staff use open questions to support the children's learning at the different activities. They key work the children, making regular observations related to the early learning goals and use these to chart individual progress and development. The observations are used to focus planning for the future. However, staff do not identify the next stepping stone from their observations making this more difficult to implement satisfactorily. The staff team evaluates the daily plans verbally. The children's development and progress files are well-organised and include photographs of the children at activities and some of their paintings and drawings. Parents have regular opportunities to meet with their child's key worker and discuss their development and progress and share these records. Parents receive a well-written report when their child leaves the group to attend full-time school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated as individuals and with equal concern. Staff use the detailed information provided by the parents to ensure each child's individual needs are met at all times. For example, individual dietary needs. Children attend from a range of cultures. Staff check each child's cultural background and religion to ensure the group's daily prayer and grace used each session do not offend others. Alternative arrangements are made if children are unable to participate in these activities.

The children all access a good range of toys, equipment and activities, promoting all areas of equal opportunities. For example dolls of different ethnic minorities and books. Topics incorporate different festivals and cultures offering children the opportunity to learn more about other people and the world about them. For example, St David's Day, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

New children settle well through the sensitive approach followed by the group. Staff are fully aware some children need more time to develop confidence with the staff team. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child as long as they feel necessary. The parents are confident their child is in safe hands when they leave their child for the first time.

Children with special needs receive good care and attention. The special needs co-ordinator is suitably trained and fully aware of her individual role and responsibilities. Staff provide excellent support to children with special needs often on a one to one basis, particularly during large and small group activities. This enables children to be fully involved, aiding their individual

progress and development. Individual play plans are incorporated into the groups programme and staff liaise closely with local professionals and the child's parents to provide continuity of care. The co-ordinator also visits any other setting the child attends to ensure everyone is working together. Staff support parents who are concerned their child has a speech problem, giving them the appropriate information to attend the local centre for help and advice.

Children with English as an additional language receive good support from all staff. Makaton signing and a sign language poster are used to support the child's understanding during specific activities. Staff learn simple words from the child's own language, helping them to feel safe and secure in the setting.

This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Excellent behaviour management procedures and strategies are used by all staff particularly when managing children with special behavioural needs. All staff have attended training and put their learning into practice well. For example, children refusing to tidy up are given time to think about it and usually immediately co-operate with the request without any fuss. This helps to maintain the harmony between the staff and children in the setting.

Minimal behaviour management is required as most children behave well and follow the rules. Staff calmly remind children not to run indoors and children respond appropriately. All children are developing good sitting, listening and looking skills.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are fully involved in the setting as they are part of the management committee, organise fund raising activities, help in the setting and support the children's learning and development through sharing their own skills with the staff and children. They receive very good information about the group and its curriculum and activities. This enables them to support their children's learning and development at home. An up-to-date notice board is readily available, keeping parents informed of everything happening within the group.

Regular coffee mornings help new parents to feel part of the group and make new friends. Parents are very positive about the group and recommend it to their friends. They find the staff very friendly, approachable and helpful. The parents are aware of their child's development and progress. Staff seek parents views through an evaluation form and make a concerted effort to develop any areas of concern. For example, they arrange open events to explain the curriculum and introduce the reception teacher from the local school. This helps parents understand how children learn through play while meeting the early learning goals.

Parents are very aware of the complaints procedures and feel confident the staff team and committee will resolve any concerns appropriately.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. Children are safe and well cared for at all times. The qualified, consistent, well-deployed, dedicated and organised staff team work very well together to provide a caring environment. All staff are aware of their individual role and responsibilities for each session through the organised rotas and staff discussion each morning.

Staff implement the daily plans, ensuring the children access stimulating activities each day. They supervise the children well, supporting their development and learning through the high adult to child ratio provided each day.

Staff ensure the safety of the children at all times particularly during arrival and departure times. They record when children arrive late or leave early to ensure they are aware of exactly who is on the premises at any time. Staff monitor the premises closely to ensure children are unable to leave unnoticed.

The implementation of the group's sound policies and procedures promotes the children's health, safety and well-being. The committee agrees to adopt the reviewed, updated policies and procedures at the Annual General Meeting. This ensures they are relevant to any changes to the National Standards protecting the children at all times.

The management and staff have a clear vision for the future. They intend to continue to improve their service and provide quality care for children. The children benefit from the staff's professional approach to their work as they regularly attend training to develop their child care skills. Senior staff are undertaking the Foundation Degree to meet Ofsted requirements for the future. Other staff training completed includes first aid, child protection and behaviour management, implementing this in the setting. All staff participate in a formal and informal appraisal process which identifies individual strengths and areas for development. The management committee fully supports staff attending additional training opportunities as this in turn improves the care the children receive. The group are currently fund raising for the Autistic Trust as part of their community project. This helps develop the children and parents' awareness of children with special needs.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group has worked hard to make the improvements suggested at the previous inspection.

They now use all areas of the premises effectively and have re-assessed the large group activities particularly when younger children are in attendance. This area continues to be under review to ensure the group are meeting the children's individual needs.

Open events have been implemented to provide more opportunities for parents to see their child's key worker and records relating to progress and development. This helps to ensure the children's development is fully supported in the child's home.

Staff continue to train and improve their understanding of delivering the early learning goals to ensure the children are fully supported in their development and progress. They use observations regularly, taking into account children's individual interests when planning and delivering the curriculum. Play activities provide children with opportunities to develop and progress at their individual rate, offering more challenge for older children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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.

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):

- continue to review the large group registration and snack activities to ensure all children have a meaningful experience
- record more detailed information relating to the regular fire drills to identify any specific problems which may require attention

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):

- evaluate the weekly curriculum more formally to identify whether it met the children's individual needs
- evaluate the observations for each child identifying the next steps for progress and development. Use this information in the curriculum planning to ensure all children's individual needs are included in the activities offered.

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