



St Alban's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Unique Reference Number | 139959 |
| Inspection date | 18 July 2006 |
| Inspector | Lindsay Ann Farenden |
| Setting Address | St. Albans Church Hall, Gander Green Lane, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 2HD |
| Telephone number | 020 8641 1077 |
| E-mail | mob 07889913427 8am to 3pm |
| Registered person | Susan Elizabeth Tinker |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Full day 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 Albans Pre-school opened 1992. It operates from one large hall and a smaller hall and there is a kitchen and toilets. There is an enclosed garden area for outside play. It is situated in the London Borough of Sutton. The Pre-school is open five days a week during term time and some days during the school holidays. Sessions run between 09.00 until 14.45, 09.00 until 12.00 and 12.15 until 14.45.

The Pre-school is registered for 26 children from two years to five years at any one

time. There are currently 77 children on roll, of which 31 children receive nursery education. The Pre-school serves the local and wider areas.

There are 11 part time staff who work with the children. There are six staff who have a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment and maintain good health because staff follow good procedures and practices. This ensures children's physical, nutritional and health needs are met. Children wash their hands with soap, as part of every day routines, such as before eating and after using the toilet. Staff explain the importance of hand washing to the children. Older children know why they wash their hands. For example, to make them clean and to stop germs. The children are protected from the risk of cross infection, because staff use effective procedures during nappy changing.

Children enjoy snack time, which is made into a sociable occasion, where they sit in small groups at tables and have general discussions with staff and between themselves. Staff inform children that snacks are available, so they can choose when they would like to eat and drink. This means children learn to control their bodily needs and helps not to interrupt their concentration whilst playing and learning. Children receive nutritious snacks of a good variety of fruits. This helps children develop healthy eating habits from a young age and a fondness of fruit. To prevent children getting thirsty or dehydrated, drinks are available to children at all times. During hot weather, staff encourage children to drink regularly throughout the sessions. Staff use snack time to help children learn about colours as they ask children what colour plates and they have.

Children's health and welfare are protected well because several staff hold a first aid certificate and the first aid box is well stocked. This means children are safeguarded in the event of an accident. For continuity of care parents are notified of any accidents and parents have provided appropriate consents in relation to medication and emergency treatment. Children who are infectious do not attend the nursery, thus preventing the spread of contagious ailments.

Children have good opportunities to receive plenty of fresh air and exercise, which contributes to keeping them healthy. They develop a positive attitude to physical exercise from a wide range of activities provided. Children enjoy manoeuvring bikes and cars around the garden, showing a good awareness of space and safety. They learn to balance as they climb up slides and various rockers. They learn to control their bodies through playing tennis and various ball games and obstacle courses.

Children's eye and hand co-ordination is encouraged well through a good variety of activities, such as painting with brushes, threading, using glue sticks, building with construction resources and cutting with scissors.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have access to a wide range of play resources and equipment, which are of good quality and appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are well organised so children have lots of space to play safely and make independent choices.

Children enjoy their play in a safe environment, where staff do daily checks to reduce potential hazards before the children arrive. There are very effective security systems in place for the children's arrival and departure, which includes supervision of the entrance door and ensuring the door is secure when parents leave. The risk of accidental injury is reduced because the staff organise themselves well, so children can be supervised at all times both inside the building and the garden. This means that children's safety is given top priority. Children are helped to learn to keep themselves safe as staff explain to children not to run indoors, as they may hurt themselves. They show an awareness of safety when riding bikes, manoeuvring them so they do not crash into one another or into other children.

Children and staff practise the emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis. This helps children become familiar with the procedures so they learn to leave the premises quickly and safely.

The children are well protected by staff who have a good understanding of the child protection procedures and how to proceed if they have concerns about a child. This gives priority to the children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children arrive happily and are eager to participate. Their happiness at being in the group is evident, as they enthusiastically make their way to the good range of play resources. Staff are very welcoming to parents and children and greet them with smiles and positive comments. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop good self esteem. New children are settled by staff, who are caring and sensitive to their individual needs.

The organisation of the resources is very good. The children are fully encouraged to move freely between the hall the outside area. This encourages children to independently choose toys and activities themselves and explore through play at their own pace.

Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well and link it to planning, to provide good quality care and learning experiences for younger children. Children achieve well because staff use their child development knowledge to plan a wide range of activities. They ensure that younger children have lots of opportunities to explore and communicate through their senses. For example, the creative activities are organised so that children can explore texture and feel the resources they are handling.

Children use their imaginations very well. They enjoy dressing up and playing in the well equipped home corner. They enjoy having stories read to them, which encourages their language development. They like singing songs and enjoy taking part in action songs, joining in with repeated refrains and movements.

Children have a very warm rapport with staff and close relationships with each other. They give good levels of support and praise to children, which encourages their sense of well being and makes them feel secure. Staff are enthusiastic and very committed and obviously enjoy working with children. This rubs off on the children who are equally enthusiastic. They join in with their play and help them with various activities, whilst also leaving children to play freely if they wish.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are motivated by a good range of resources which support their learning in all areas of the Foundation Stage. The children are excited and motivated to learn and initiate their own play. They quickly link up with friends and play well together using the play resources. Staff are at hand to assist and encourage them to explore and experiment as they play.

Children are developing independence and good self help skills. They independently use the toilet, they pull the chain, wash their hands with soap. They are encouraged to make choices as they decide when to have drink and snack and confidently pour their own drinks.

Staff provide lots of opportunities to help children to learn the letters of the alphabet. For example, there are large laminated alphabet cards, in various areas of the hall such as the writing table, construction area, book area and hanging across the wall in the garden. Staff then constantly discuss the letters as children play and when they show interest in them. For example, one child enthusiastically collected various cards from around the hall, showing a member of staff she could spell her name. Children often spend time, looking and making sounds the letters themselves.

Children use language well to express themselves and to link up and play with others. Children enthusiastically answer questions during circle time. Children handle books carefully turning the pages, pointing to the pictures and re-telling stories to themselves. This shows they are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. Older children recognise their own names as they select their name to put on a board.

Children are keen to mark make, and write for a variety of purposes, as they make shapes on the wall with large paint brushes and water and use chalks to draw on the patio area outside. They enjoy using pencils and crayons to draw and practise their writing skills, although the writing table is not well resourced. More able children are able to write their own names, forming recognisable letters. They enjoy tracing over letters, numbers and patterns in their work books, which children can do if they choose to. Children are introduced to sounds of letters, as staff talk to them about objects, which begin with letters of the alphabet. However children tend to learn the sound of capital letters, so are not always helped to link sounds of letters to words.

Staff provide good opportunities for children to develop mathematical thinking. Staff use lots of effective questioning to encourage children to count, for example, 'how many red bricks have you got?' 'can you find the number of bricks using the flash cards?' The more able children are able to count up to 20 and know various shapes and colours. They develop a good awareness of measurement, as they weigh and count spoonfuls of ingredients during cooking sessions. Children enjoy learning about volume and capacity when pouring water and sand into different and the same size containers. Staff ensure construction resources are well displayed, so children have good opportunities to enjoy constructing their own models and designs.

Children learn about life cycles, as staff provide opportunities for children to learn about living things over time. For example, children planted sunflower seeds, watered them and watched them grow. They learn about the natural world, as they do topics, such as what lives under the sea. Photographs and discussions with staff encourage children to discuss past events. Children have regular access to a computer to develop their confidence in using technology. They learn about others, through activities based on cultural festivals and a good range of resources depicting diversity.

Children's creative experiences are fully enhanced, as they explore colour, shape and texture through a variety of activities. For example children enjoy painting with brushes, using a variety of colours and sometimes mixing them together to create new colours. This gives children opportunities to explore what happens when they mix colours. Children are given excellent opportunities to create their own designs independently, using tools, glue and paint how they wish. For example, they made their own display relating to the topic of who lives under the sea, with staff giving support and guidance when required. They enjoy moulding and rolling play dough. Children use their imaginations very well, as they construct a puppet theatre and take turns to do the puppet show. Children enjoy learning about the sounds of musical instrument, as they play with them in group sessions.

Staff work well with parents to find out about children's skills, as they ask parents to complete a developmental profile on their child. They then use this information as a starting point to build on what children know and to help them make progress in all areas of learning. Staff plan activities based on themes, which are meaningful to the children. They have a flexible approach, adjusting the length and time of the activities and topics according to children's interests. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully, to encourage children's thinking and language skills. Staff have a good awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan activities which encourage children to make progress in all areas. They use good systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and interests. This information is then used well to inform the planning of activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents is good. Children benefit significantly from the positive

partnership staff have developed from parents. The pre-school has a flexible approach, to help new children settle and works closely with parents according to meet each child's individual needs. All children are welcomed as they arrive and play a full part in the pre-school. This is because staff value and respect their individuality and family context for each child. Children benefit from staff actively seeking parents views about their child's needs and development from the parent when they first start. Staff are very friendly towards the parents and exchange information with them, when they bring and collect their child. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress, through individual meetings offered to parents about observations of their development. Parents receive a report on child's progress when they move onto school. The notice boards keep parents well informed of what letters, numbers and colours children are learning each week and the activity plans. The policies and procedures are made easily accessible to parents at all times.

Children with special needs are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. There is wheelchair access and a disabled toilet is available. Staff value and respect their individuality and are keen to promote an inclusive environment. Children with special needs are given good support to make progress. Staff work closely with parents and seek advice from the early years special needs education co-ordinator when setting meaningful targets as part of individual educational plans. Staff work closely with child's teacher when they leave, to help children with special needs have a smooth transition into school.

Children develop positive attitudes about others. They are learn about their own and different religious festivals and events from well planned meaningful activities. For example, at Chinese New Year children made paper lanterns, streamers, red money envelopes and listened to Chinese music. Children learn about diversity through a good range of play resources and books reflecting positive images of culture and gender. These are fully integrated into everyday play. There are some posters displaying positive images of disability, but children have few opportunities to access toys in this area. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Children play and behave very well. They willingly take turns to use the resources. Children understand the boundaries of the pre-school because they are involved in making the rules of the pre-school. This helps them take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff use lots of praise to reinforce good behaviour and to acknowledge children's efforts and achievements. Staff provide good role models for children by talking to them quietly and in a kind manner.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff make the hall into a child centred environment, in which the play resources are very well presented. Good use is made of space, to maximise play opportunities for children. Children are cared for in an environment which gives them confidence to select a wide range of resources independently and to settle well. Staff organise themselves very well, so children are well supported throughout each session.

The staffing levels are well maintained and staff are employed very effectively during each session. The operational plan is clear and works well in practice. It covers all aspects of how the setting is run in relation to the National Standards. All policies and procedures are in place and available to staff and used very effectively to promote the welfare and care of the children. Documentation is very well maintained and there are good systems in place to share information with parents.

There are regular opportunities for staff to meet together, to share ideas and suggestions for planning. Staff attend training to keep them updated on changing childcare practices. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of care and education, as part of an accredited quality assurance scheme. The manager also undertakes a self evaluation process, relating to the National Standards. There is an effective key worker system, which ensures staff know children's needs well. Staff attend regular training to keep up to date with changing practices and procedures. Children are well protected and kept safe through effective recruitment procedures. This ensures staff are appropriately vetted and qualified to determine their suitability to work with children. There is a written induction programme for new staff. This ensures they are aware of the procedures and able to meet the children's needs and routines.

Leadership and management is good. The manager is a good role model and she ensures staff have an awareness of the Foundation Stage curriculum. She ensures staff are able to provide a varied and exciting range of planned activities, based on what they know about the children's development and their interests. This enables children to make good progress. The manager works directly with the staff team and is able to observe their performance during each session, so the quality of teaching is continually monitored. A formal appraisal system has recently been devised and will be further used to monitor teaching and staff training needs. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations were made at the last inspection. Since the last inspection the registered person has improved required documentation. The record of accidents is sufficiently detailed, the attendance record now includes details of children's arrival and departure times, the child protection policy has been updated and is shared with parents before children start at the pre-school. This means that children safety and well being are protected.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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):

- obtain play resources and books reflecting positive images of disability

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):

- ensure children have plenty of access to a good range of colouring, drawing and writing at all times and develop children knowledge of lower case letters, to help them learn to link the sounds of them to words

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk