

St Chads Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	300711
Inspection date	09 October 2007
Inspector	Sarah Gilpin
Setting Address	54-56 Abbey Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S8 0BP
Telephone number	0114 2748289
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Registered person	St Chads Pre-school Playgroup
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 Chad's Pre-school has been a registered community playgroup for over 30 years. It operates in St Chad's Church Hall in the Abbey Lane area of Sheffield and serves the local community. The pre-school has use of one large play room, kitchen, toilet facilities and there is a secure outdoor area.

Sessional care is provided each weekday, from 09.15 to 11.45 during school term times only. The provision may care for 21 children from two to five years at any one time. They are currently caring for 35 children of whom 28 are in receipt of nursery education funding. There is provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those children who speak English as an additional language.

There are nine staff working with the children; all of whom hold a level 2 or three qualification in childcare. Three members of staff are currently on training programmes. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The environment in which the children play is clean and maintained to a good standard. Children learn about good hygiene practices through everyday routines. They actively engage in hand washing before they sit down for their snack and show an awareness of the need to clean their sticky fingers after they have eaten. Resources, such as an easily accessible bowl of water and pump soap ensures that children can clean themselves following the painting activity, as a result, they are developing their independence in this area. There are effective systems in place for dealing with accidents, such as staff who hold suitable first aid qualifications and a well stocked first aid box. However, the organisation of the records offers limited opportunities for the manager to monitor the records to highlight any recurring accident or trends.

The children benefit from fresh air and exercise each day as they move from inside to outdoors during the session. There is a good range of equipment to help develop the children's large motor skills, for example, they propel themselves around on trundle toys and scooters. They balance along the footprints in the grass and enthusiastically play the hanging musical instruments. Children's hand-eye coordination is developing well because they enjoy moulding the playdough and cut sticky tape and paper to size when they make models and collage pictures.

A good variety of snack foods are provided for the children to choose from, these include fresh fruit and toast with a range of toppings. The café style snack forms part of the planning for children's learning. For example, the staff use good questioning techniques to get children to describe the taste of the toppings used. The planned 'fruit salad' making activity is extremely popular with the children who eagerly chop fresh fruit and enjoy what they make. The staff work in partnership with the parents to ensure that children are not given foods which they may be allergic to and details of dietary requirements are recorded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment that is maintained to ensure it is safe and secure. They are cared for by staff who are vigilant and actively support their play. For example, children are closely supervised as they explore inside the setting and when they play outside. The children's arrival and departure at the pre-school is carefully monitored by the staff who welcome them in each session and there is a clear record kept of visitors to the setting. In addition, staff carry out a health and safety check each session before the children are admitted into the pre-school. All of which ensures that the children's safety is maintained. Suitable fire safety precautions are in place and the regular fire evacuation practises help raise the adults and the children's awareness of how to deal with emergency situations.

The children safely access the toys and resources, which are set out at their level. The equipment that they use meets the required safety standards and is routinely checked by the staff to ensure that items remain safe. Gentle reminders from staff mean that children have a growing awareness of how to keep themselves safe as they move around the setting. For example, they explain that they should take care of others when using wheeled toys in the garden and take care when using the scissors to cut sticky tape.

Staff safeguard children because they have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in dealing with child protection concerns. The clear and successful recording systems, such as existing injuries and incident records, ensure that staff monitor the children carefully and act in their best interests. There is a policy for dealing with child protection concerns and this contains the required section on dealing with allegations against a member of the staff team.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children are settled, happy and relaxed in the pre-school because they build warm and trusting relationships with the consistent staff team. Children are comfortable in their surroundings and seek support and guidance easily from staff as they play together. The pre-school operates each morning and the children's attendance patterns vary. The staff have some understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, however, their plans for the younger children do not currently take account of the aspects within the framework.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff use their good working knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum to plan a variety of interesting activities for the children. They use themes, such as the senses, to focus their planning and the learning intentions for the children. The staff discuss how the planning was implemented each week, however, this informal evaluation is not used to inform the future plans for the children. In addition, the theme based plans are not always influenced by the children's interests. The staff are in the process of changing the environment to offer the children more choice through the provision of continual resources and this is in the early stages of development. Good use is made of the outdoor area to extend the play and learning opportunities the children have. Staff interact closely with the children throughout the session and use their questioning skills effectively to test the children's understanding and extend their learning. For example, they encourage children to talk about their likes and dislikes.

The children's progress is assessed using records that show their achievements in line with the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Photographs are taken and observations are made of the children at play, however, these are not clearly linked to the assessment to provide evidence of the progress children make over time.

The children are interested and eager to get involved in the activities set out for them each day. They are confident because they build warm and harmonious relationships with the adults and they are developing close friendships with their peers. The staff are helping the children to be more independent because the resources and equipment are beginning to be organised at their level. Children show good awareness of their own needs and can manage their own personal hygiene easily because the facilities are adjacent to the play area.

The children enjoy the company of their peers and they seek others out to play with chosen activities and resources. They are articulate and are beginning to use their growing vocabulary to negotiate with their friends. Books are enjoyed by the children who independently look at them when sat in the comfortable story corner. They respond well to group story sessions, which are effectively enhanced by the use of props. However, their enjoyment of the group story is often disrupted by the noise made as staff clear the room. The children enjoy opportunities to write purposefully, such as when they attempt to write their names on their

art work. The older and more able children have good pencil control and can accurately form some of the letters of their names. The environment is rich in text and good use is made of factual books to support children's learning.

Children confidently and spontaneously use mathematical language in their play as they talk about the number, shape and position of items and toys. They accurately name shapes and use words to describe a round circle shape they are using as wheels on their models. Children show an understanding of the order of numbers as they count together. They are developing an understanding of turn taking as they are encouraged to self regulate their time on the computer. They demonstrate their skills in using the mouse to click and drag to complete programmes. The group register sessions are organised to provide some differentiation for the older and more able children. They show a good awareness of seasonal change and the weather in their local environment. Photographic displays are used to remind children of past activities, such as planting herbs in the garden.

They demonstrate their inventive skills as they make interesting models using boxes, sticky tape, glue and bottle tops. Children's imaginations are developing as they pretend to make foods for their friends in the café. They use their own experiences to act out an interesting narrative as they explore caring for baby dolls in the home based role play area. The children have opportunities to explore paint, glue and other media, and their individual creativity is celebrated because the staff produce attractive displays of their paintings and creations. The children's physical development is encouraged because the outdoor area is included in the planning and used for most of the session each day. A variety of planned activities using the good range of resources ensures the children have chance to balance and propel themselves around. They enthusiastically thread and weave ribbons through the gates and trellis to create colourful patterns.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are cared for by a consistent staff team who build warm relationships with them and recognise their individual needs. The children have access to a wide range of age appropriate resources and staff provide activities that help to develop their understanding of the local community and the world around them. For example, they go out on visits and they engage in activities relating to the festivals and celebrations of other cultures and religions. Children with disabilities and learning difficulties are successfully included in all aspects of the provision. Individual staff support, and the input from other professionals, means that all children can join in and enjoy all of the activities provided. The building is all on ground floor level and is easily accessible to all.

Children behave very well because of the calm and consistent approach used by staff. Children are busy and on task for much of the session, any incidents of unwanted behaviour are dealt with effectively by the staff who use positive reinforcement to promote good behaviour. The children understand the routines of the pre-school and report those who do not conform to staff expectations. For example, when a child is not careful when riding around in a car in the garden, their actions are highlighted to the adults. The children are beginning to understand that equipment and resources need to be looked after because they join staff at tidy up time. Children's self-esteem is successfully developed by staff who celebrate their achievements and display their creative work. As a result, the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is a good partnership with parents and carers. A wealth of information is provided to ensure that the parents know about the provision for their children. For example, the weekly plans are displayed and the policies and procedures are easily accessible. Parents and children are made very welcome by the staff and easy-going informal discussions ensure that all information relating to the children's changing needs is successfully exchanged each day.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are cared for in an effectively managed setting that is well organised. They have access to a wide range of activities, resources and experiences each day because the staff successfully plan for their learning and enjoyment. The effective deployment of staff means that children are well supported as they play and can be carefully monitored throughout the session. There are suitable systems for the recruitment and checking of staff and this ensures that children are cared for by adults who are suitable to do so. The stability of the staff team means that these are not put into practice very often, however, the manager shows a clear understanding of the processes for successful recruitment. The policies and procedures contain the required detail and are implemented well by the staff, and children's well-being is effectively promoted. The attendance register is accurately kept and a separate record is kept of children who arrive late or depart early.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff are supported effectively by the manager who works directly with them and ensures they have a clear understanding of the National Standards and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff training and development opportunities are planned through discussion and by giving consideration to the skills and knowledge the staff already have. The manager works with the staff to monitor the care and learning opportunities the children have and this results in positive outcomes for the children. The manager knows what the setting does well and where there are areas for development, such as the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in the planning for children.

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 of care the setting was asked to improve the following: to up date the child protection policy; to obtain written consent for and record all medication given to the children and to ensure staff were familiar with the policy for lost and uncollected children. As a result, the policy for child protection has been up dated and now contains all of the required elements. There is now a clear procedure for dealing with lost or uncollected children, which is shared with staff and parents to ensure they can act in the best interests of the children. Finally, there is a suitable system for obtaining consent prior to any medication being given to the children and a recording system is in place.

At the last inspection of nursery education the setting was asked to develop the following; to improve the environment to allow children more choice and to develop the assessment of the children to inform the planning for their progress and learning. There have been significant improvements in both areas, for example, there are more opportunities for the children to choose from a wider range of activities and resources. A further recommendation has been raised to continue this development. In addition, the current assessment of children does illustrate their progress of time.

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 complaint 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):

- review how accident and incident records are monitored to highlight any trends and recurring accidents
- plan and provide activities to help children's development in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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):

- continue to develop the planning, evaluation and assessment systems using observations of what the children are interested in and can do
- review the organisation of the session to ensure the children take part in a story time that they have the opportunity to learn from and enjoy
- continue to promote the children's independence by developing the continual provision and their opportunities to choose from the available resources.

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