

# St Richard's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique Reference Number** 109516  
**Inspection date** 19 October 2007  
**Inspector** Stacey Sangster

**Setting Address** St. Richards Pre School, Park Road, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8DT

**Telephone number**

**E-mail**

**Registered person** The Trustees of St Richard'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](http://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 Richards Pre-School opened in 1969. It operates from the church hall, using one large room and has use of a smaller room. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 16 children from two to five years on roll, of which 12 are funded. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Currently there are no children with special needs nor any children for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9:15 until 12:00 with a lunch club until 12:45 where demand warrants this.

Four staff work with the children of these three have a Level 3 qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted by the clean and well maintained condition of the premises. Tables are prepared before snack, by staff using antibacterial wipes. Children understand the reasons why they need to wash their hands before touching their food and are supported in this by the pre-school routines. Effective policies and procedures, which exclude children who are suffering from a contagious illness or disease, help to reduce the risk of cross infection and protect children's health. Appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the needs of children if they become unwell during the session.

Children enjoy healthy snacks including crackers, raisins, fruit and toast. They understand which foods are healthy and which need to be eaten in moderation. Children discuss the health values of foods without prompting, for example while putting together a pretend teddy bears picnic during role play. Children eat packed lunches provided by parents who support the healthy eating ethos of the setting. Information about diet and health are available to parents and the setting work with local health professionals such as dentists opticians and health visitor services to promote the children's health.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are protected by the setting's arrangements for security of the building. Staff are extremely vigilant at monitoring children's access to the front door and are aware that many of the children can open the stair gate, which acts as a barrier to the vestibule between the hall and the toilets. An alarm sounds if the front door is opened and this ensures that no-one can leave or enter the building without staff knowledge.

Regular risk assessments of the premises and procedures ensure that the practices of the group are reviewed regularly. Children and staff are protected by a range of equipment and procedures to keep themselves safe. Children are provided with advice and instruction about how to keep themselves and others safe when using resources and moving about the setting. Children understand they reasons why the need to behave in certain ways and as a result are developing a greater understanding of the safety implications of their actions. Equipment is of good quality, is well maintained and suitable for the ages of the children using it.

The setting have a clear and detailed child protection policy, which all staff are familiar with. This ensures that where staff have a concern about a child in their care, they are aware of their role and responsibility and know who to share the information with in order to safeguard the welfare of the child.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children come into the setting eagerly and receive a warm and friendly welcome from staff. Children showing anxiety or upset, at leaving their carer are provided with additional support and this helps them to settle more quickly. Children understand the routines of the setting and listen well to staff instructions. They demonstrate a good awareness of the routine and are

able to tell visitors the order of the activities that will take place such as the register then free play, snack and home time.

Children are fully engaged in the activities on offer. Discussions at registration time, remind the children of the theme that they are looking at that week and this helps the children to make links in their play. The children enjoy, for example, acting out the teddy bears picnic in the role play area and creating paw prints or painting scenes from the story in the art area.

Staff speak to the children about what they are doing asking open questions which encourage children to think about the tasks they are engaged in. Staff allow children to experiment and explore, for example, covering the paper with paint at the paw printing activity or spending time just exploring the texture of the finger paints and discussing how it feels on their hands.

Staff and children demonstrate positive relationships. Staff chat to children about what they have done at home, about their pets and families and share stories of their own lives to illustrate similarities. Children are relaxed and confident in the company of the adults. The positive interaction encourages children to feel that their opinions and comments are valued and respected. Children are confident to share different points of view safe in the knowledge that they have a right to their own beliefs and thoughts. They can be heard to express their opposing views, in a matter of fact way, during discussions.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress in this setting, in all six areas of learning. They enjoy books and stories particularly those which staff link to other activities. This enables the children to reflect on the tale in greater depth and encourages its retelling. Children explore the characters and sequences of events often re-enacting them in their free play. They are confident speakers and most enjoy addressing the group to share news, ideas or answer questions.

The children's writing skills are developing well, older children label their artwork forming recognisable letters and all enjoy finding letters from their own names and those of their friends and exploring the sounds they represent. Children are confident at counting and do so enthusiastically in groups and on their own. Many children can be heard to count spontaneously in their play and older children are beginning to use simple calculating for problem solving. Staff ask children to work out how many plates and cups they need at snack time for their table and then extend this by asking how many more or less that would be if children joined or left the table.

The role play area is well used by the children in this group, they also enjoy expressing themselves creatively musically with songs, rhymes and musical instruments and demonstrate an increasing ability to follow rhythms and beats. Children have daily opportunities to use art and craft materials and show pride in their developing ability to produce recognisable images.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is enhanced by their exploration of a range of festivals and celebrations relating to different cultures and religions. All children have opportunities to take part in activities which reflect their own and their families beliefs. They enjoy accessing the new laptop and staff report that their computer skills are developing well. Children notice changes in materials such as the effect of adding water to flour during baking activities. They develop their physical skills, enjoying energetic play and skills such as climbing and balancing when using large apparatus. The children's fine motor skills are assisted by their

regular access to small tools including scissors, paint brushes and pencils which they use with increasing control.

The friendly and relaxed atmosphere of the setting helps children to settle well and enjoy their time. The positive interaction between staff and children helps to build their self esteem. Enthusiastic staff ask open questions and invite children to explore and investigate their ideas, which makes them confident and well motivated learners.

Assessment is effectively used to track children's progress from the activities they take part in at the preschool. It is valued as a tool to guide the planning of future activities. The curriculum planned is well balanced and interesting.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered. There are good procedures for recording children's individual needs, and staff use this and their personal knowledge of each individual child to ensure that activities and routines on offer support all of the children. All children's and families religious and cultural beliefs are respected and supported.

Children with special needs are supported appropriately. The setting have a policy of inclusion. Children and staff routinely use simple sign language irrespective of the attendance of any children who need to use it. This ensures that when children who sign do join the setting, they enter an environment where they can communicate and make themselves understood more easily. Signing also introduces the children to the concept that not everyone is able to communicate verbally.

Children have clear boundaries that they understand because they are applied consistently. Children behave well and are well mannered. Staff and children behave with respect towards each other. Behaviour is managed according to their age and stage of development. Staff ensure children are busy and contented and act as good role models which children mirror.

Parents are welcomed to the setting and can become involved in its running by joining the committee. Staff are always available to talk to them ensuring that children's individual needs are met and as such the partnership with parents in relation to care is good. Children's educational progress is discussed formally at parent consultations. Parents are invited to support their children at home in whole group projects, for example, when the setting send home information such as songs and rhymes the children are learning. However they miss opportunities, to more regularly, update parents on the specific progress that their child is making. Parents are not routinely told the next step the key worker has identified specifically for their child. There are also missed opportunities to obtain and use information from parents about what children are achieving at home and include this in the formal assessment of their learning. This weakens the effectiveness of the otherwise strong partnership with parents, in relation to the children's education.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The setting meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are supported well because the staff team are experienced and well qualified. Staff demonstrate a commitment to ongoing training.

The leadership and management is good. The setting is a committee run charitable trust and is supported by committee members who are past and present parents. The setting has a variety of systems in place to monitor the provision and continually update and improve what they are offering to the children.

Children are very well supported as the staff to child ratios are higher than regulations require. At all times minimum ratios are met and in most sessions an additional member of staff is employed. This enables children to engage in one to one activities where needed without compromising the support available to the rest of the group. Children who are shy or new and needing support to settle are also very well supported because of the extra staff on hand.

Documentation is well organised and effective in guiding staff and informing parents. Procedures are updated regularly although written policies are not always updated sufficiently to reflect these. The complaint procedure is an example of this. The setting use publications produced by a support organisation for pre-schools and this ensures that their records contain all of the information that is required by regulation. Children benefit as the systems for recording details about them are effectively used to enhance their care and education.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Good progress has been made in relation the recommendations made in relation to education, from the last inspection. Staff extend activities to challenge the more able children on a daily basis and use the assessment very effectively to inform their future planning. The introduction of the parent consultations is a positive step towards involving parents in the child's learning and for them to share what they know about the child. Extending this further would enhance the partnership with parents and the support that children receive in their learning.

The setting have made satisfactory progress in relation to updating the complaint procedure, although minor work is needed to ensure that the written policy reflects these changes more thoroughly. The current policy does not inform parents that were a complaint to be made a summary would be available for parents to read.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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.

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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 that the written policies which inform parents and guide staff are updated to reflect changes in practice.

#### **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 the partnership with parents in relation to children's learning by increasing the information about where children are on amore regular basis and ensuring that parental feedback is included in the formal assessment of children's progress.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)