



St. Michaels Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY307897
Inspection date	25 April 2006
Inspector	Helen Maria Steven

Setting Address	John Keble Anglican Church Primary School, Crownhill Road, London, NW10 4DR
Telephone number	020 8961 8516
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Registered person	St Michaels Nursery
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 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 Michael's Nursery is privately owned and is one of three nurseries operated by the provider all in the London Borough of Brent. It opened in September 2005 and operates from two rooms in a purpose-built building situated on the site of a primary school.

A maximum of 48 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 throughout the year. All children share

access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 47 children aged from 1 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 9 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery provides a service for the local community. The nursery currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 9 staff, 6 of whom, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. 3 staff are working towards a qualification. The nursery employs a cook and also have 2 volunteers and a student on placement.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's good health is generally promoted well as staff implement effective hygiene procedures, for example with appropriate nappy changing practices. However, children without their own sleeping bags share bedding, which exposes them to a risk of cross infection. Children independently access tissues to wipe their noses and remind their friends when they need to. The manager is keen for all staff members to undertake relevant first aid training, which is currently being undertaken on a rolling programme. They have appropriate systems to record administration of medicines and accidents which staff maintain suitably.

Children benefit from well balanced lunches, which are cooked freshly on the premises. The meals offered are a mixture of familiar foods to the children and food from other cultures. In contrast the food offered at tea time does not promote healthy eating, for example on some days children are offered biscuits and fruit as their meal. Water is readily available for the children to access when they identify they are thirsty and it is offered at snack and meal times.

Children enjoy fresh air and physical activities each day as the staff take them outside as part of the routine. Children skilfully throw and kick small balls around the garden and develop control over their bodies as they negotiate space when manoeuvring tricycles and other wheeled toys around the garden. Staff members improvise a stop start game using red and green hoops to represent traffic lights; children eagerly peddle around the circuit and enjoy the staff members role play as they have to stop to enable them to 'cross the road' safely. Younger children have limited opportunities in the garden due to many of the resources on offer being too large for them. Physical and outdoor activities are not included in the plans which results in missed opportunities to promote children's development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move around the inside of the environment, with babies under 2 years having a base room. However the base room is not used exclusively for babies and

at times there are too many children using the space to enable the babies to explore the area freely.

Risk assessments are in place and a daily safety check is undertaken each morning, however hazards are overlooked, for example the bolt on the garden gate was difficult to lock, which resulted in it being persistently left open endangering the children. The manager addressed the issues when they were highlighted and she is reviewing the safety check procedure to ensure that hazards are not overlooked in future.

Children's safety is maintained by staff supervision, but opportunities are missed to develop children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe through explanations. Fire drills are carried out regularly at different times of the day to ensure all children develop confidence in following the procedures. Staff accurately record these drills to assist in improving their evacuation procedure.

There is a basic range of suitable and safe equipment within the nursery. Few resources are stored in low-level displays to enable the children to access them easily. The computer station is not ergonomic for small children resulting in them having to tip their heads back to view the high screen.

Children are adequately protected because staff have a sound understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues and know how to implement local procedures. A number of staff have recently attended child protection training to update their knowledge.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children settle well into the session and are confident in the routine. They partake in activities offered and interact well with their peers, building positive relationships with them. Independence is encouraged for young children who get their own coats from their pegs and get tissues to wipe spills. However, there is little opportunity for children to make independent choices during play.

Staff are aware of 'birth to three matters', but have not fully implemented the framework for all the children under three. The babies' base room is not yet developed to offer a stimulating range of activities and play opportunities to enthral the children throughout the day. Food and sleep routines are carried out as a group, thus individual patterns are not supported. For example, all the babies eat at 11:30 and sleep after lunch.

Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children's attitude to learning is positive but they lack opportunities to play an active role in making their own choices about play. They have limited opportunities to extend their play through accessing additional resources to these set out as few are organised to enable easy access.

They concentrate on their activities; however play is often disrupted by the routine which requires them to spend time as a large group.

Regular trips to the local library introduces children to the pleasure of books. However the book area in the nursery is poorly used and does not present as a cosy area to enjoy shared reading. Children are given opportunities to listen to stories, however this is done in very large groups and although the story teller is animated, the activity does not stretch the thinking of more able children. High emphasise is placed on using worksheets and learning by rote. There are limited opportunities for children to mark make in most areas of the nursery, for instance there are no diaries, calendars or notepads in the role-play area. Name cards have been developed, but are not made use of to encourage children to mark making for a purpose for example by labelling their paintings. Opportunities are missed at lunch times to develop children's communication skills through discussion in a small group. For example at inspection they are instructed to sit in silence with their hands in their laps.

Children have opportunities to learn about shape and colour through activities. They enjoy the challenges of jigsaw puzzles and view numbers on floor mats and displays on the walls. Photos show children exploring cookery, making pancakes gives them practical experience of measuring. Opportunities are missed to develop children's use of mathematical language and concepts in everyday activities, for example at snack times.

Children's creativity is enhanced by regular opportunities to explore rhythm and respond to music; however, these activities are not included in the plans and learning intentions are not identified. Children create constructions with junk and explore easel paintings. However, most displays on the walls around the provision and children's files indicate that most activities are adult determined. As this is not in itself creative it does not encourage children to communicate their own ideas.

Children's knowledge of the local community is extended when they enjoy regular trips to the local library. They learn about how things work as they play with electronic toys, although not all are working as batteries are not replaced. Children are using the computer with increasing confidence, they access a maths programme, but as four children sit around the screen the young learner using the mouse is hindered by others who press the keyboard randomly. Children have the opportunity to gain knowledge of the natural world through activities such as cress growing and observing the goldfish who is housed on a low-level surface enabling children to observe it closely.

A system is in place to record children's individual progress, although the information is basic and the assessments do not give an insight into children's interests. The records are completed every three months and are not effective in assisting staff to plan children's next stage of development. For example a child may have achieved all the areas on the tick sheet before they are aged four.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are caring towards one another and praise the achievements of others for example when they are able to spell their name they get a clap. Activities such as celebrating black history month enable children to value themselves and develop their self-esteem. Details regarding children's culture, religion and home language are not logged on children's records to support key workers in meeting children's individual needs.

Children learn about differing cultures, for example staff organised activities to celebrate St Patrick's Day to enable the children to gain knowledge of people's different customs and traditions. This positive approach fosters children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Children's behaviour overall is very good; they know what is expected of them and are clear about what is right and wrong. The organisation of the day involves many periods of large group time in a small area; it is during these times that children behave unwontedly because their attention is not held. The manager monitors her staff team to ensure that there is consistency in their approach to the children and is a good role model.

Staff aim to support children with special needs in the setting, and are proactive in developing links with outside agencies. Children benefit from a friendly relationship between staff and parents and staff solicit comments from parents to improve their service. Staff have a sound settling in process and encourage parents to meet with their child's key worker regularly. Parents are invited to play an active role in the nursery and some are developing a parent's association which is welcomed by the staff team.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are given a prospectus which has a summary regarding the areas of learning covered by the foundation stage curriculum. They receive feedback on their children's development, but there is limited information given regarding children's next steps in learning to enable parents to support their children's development at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

This is a relatively new nursery and therefore the staff team are developing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There is currently no named deputy at the provision and there is some confusion as to who is accountable if the manager is off for a day. There is appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures in place and evidence is kept of checks carried out on staff and volunteers.

There is adequate space for the numbers of children however the organisation of the space does not meet the national standards with regard to group sizes. For example there are more than 26 children cared for together in one group and babies under 2 do not have exclusive use of a base room. The routine of the day is structured to include lots of carpet time for stories and singing activities. This is carried out in the home corner, which does not lend itself to large groups due to the restriction of

space. At these times staff are not deployed effectively. For example one staff member tells the story and three others sit with the children managing their behaviour such as stopping them from touching the resources.

Children aged 2-3 who are cared for in a very large group do not benefit from the ethos of birth to three matters as medium term plans are based on the foundation stage. There is a key worker system in place, however the staff move around the nursery thus making it more difficult for babies to develop a bond with their specific worker.

Registers are kept to record staff and visitor's attendance. There are two recording systems for children's attendance, however they are contradictory, do not accurately reflect how many children are present at all times of the day and as a result they will hinder an emergency evacuation. A system for recording local outings is in place, but is not used every time a child is taken off site and it does not reflect which adult is accountable for each child.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. The manager is very proud of her team and through regular team meetings and line management she supports the staff. They have the opportunity to attend ongoing training and the manager is planning to make links with the Local Authority to gain support in implementing the foundation stage. They currently do not plan the curriculum together and systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and the impact on children's individual progress is not yet fully developed. Overall the needs of the range of children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since 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 that all children have individual bedding to reduce the risk of cross infection
- develop range of activities offered to the younger children to ensure that they are age appropriate and ensure that the routines of the day meet their individual needs
- ensure that records of children's attendance are maintained accurately
- ensure that the organisation of the nursery provision adheres to the national standards with regard to group size and the resources and routine are monitored to ensure that children's learning opportunities are enhanced

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):

- provide opportunities for children to learn mathematical concepts through daily practical activities both planned and unplanned
- organise resources to enable children to select them independently in order to support their creativity, enabling them to develop their own creations and ideas
- develop the systems to plan, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education, ensuring that children are progressing through the stepping stones and are offered sufficient challenge

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