



## **Fellowship of St Nicholas**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 511215

**Inspection date** 20 June 2006

**Inspector** Sue Taylor

**Setting Address** St Nicholas Centre, 66 London Road, St Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN37 6AS

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**Registered person** Fellowship Of St Nicholas

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** Full day care, Crèche

## 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 satisfactory. 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?

Fellowship of St Nicholas, London Road is one of two settings run by the charity and opened in 1997. The nursery opened in 2003 and operates from the first floor of a large converted house. It is situated on a main road out of St Leonards, close to shops and schools. A maximum of 30 children may attend the nursery and 18 children may attend the crèche, at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year. The crèche runs from 09:30 until 13:30,

when required. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 81 children aged under five years on roll at the nursery. Of these, 46 children receive funding for early education. The number of children on the crèche roll varies throughout the year. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 members of staff. Of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications and four are working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the daily routines carried out by the staff. For example, staff use disposable gloves for nappy changes and introduce babies to hand washing. The use of paper towels and liquid soap helps prevent cross infection. The older children know to wash their hands after using the toilet, after messy play and before eating. They do this with little prompting from staff. Documentation shared with parents regarding the care of sick children helps prevent the spread of infections.

Babies receive regular drinks, with toddlers having easy access to their own cups or beakers. The older children can get a drink of water, in addition to snack times. During warm weather, staff take a jug of water and cups into the garden. This helps children control their own thirst needs and prevent dehydration, particularly after physical play. The children benefit from a good range of healthy snacks such as various fruits and raw vegetables. Children bring their own packed lunches that are stored appropriately to prevent spoiling. Although the nursery does not provide meals, the staff have a good understanding of healthy eating for young children. They provide good written information and advice for parents and carers to encourage balanced and nutritious lunch boxes.

There are good opportunities for energetic physical play in the fresh air. Babies and children use the garden daily. Children enthusiastically use the outdoor play area and develop good skills using the equipment. They develop physical skills such as running, climbing and balancing. The older children show co-ordination and spatial awareness, moving confidently and safely. Their hand/eye co-ordination develops well as they use equipment such as pencils, scissors and glue sticks. Playing with various toys helps develop their small muscle movements. The warm and caring relationships they have with consistent staff members and keyworkers supports their emotional well being.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, children benefit from a safe and secure environment. However, the crèche door is not always secure during the session, as a result, unexpected persons may enter the room. In the nursery, good systems are in place to keep children secure. Staff supervise children well in the crèche and nursery. Staff are vigilant when indoors, outside in the garden and during outings. They are supported by risk assessments and daily checks. Good explanations and support from staff promotes children's developing knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, for example as they learn about road safety.

Good quality play materials and equipment, chosen to meet the ages and ability of the children, help provide appropriate challenges. Children are able to make choices about their play in safety, by freely accessing toys on the floor or from the low-level shelving. During outdoor play, the older children take care around the younger ones.

There are effective procedures in place, fully understood by the staff team, that help ensure children's continued safety such as around the recording and monitoring of accidents. The staff have an understanding of child protection issues. They know how to act if they have a concern about a child in their care, helping to keep children safe from harm. However, there is no written procedure to be followed in the event of allegations against staff or volunteers, which places children at risk and is a breach of regulations.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happy and settle quickly. They enjoy their time at the nursery and most show good levels of interest in the wide range of activities and toys. They have opportunities to take part in quiet and active games with daily use of the outdoor play areas. Children are very willing to take part in adult led activities. Children spend good levels of time with self-chosen play materials.

Babies and toddlers enjoy lots of positive interaction with key staff. This gives them confidence to explore and try new experiences. Staff work well with babies and toddlers to support their early development. The nursery uses the Birth to three matters framework to help plan the day's activities and routines. Recorded observations inform the developmental tracker records, from which staff devise learning plans for each child aged under three years. This ensures staff support children's individual needs, with their progress positively encouraged.

The crèche offers a good range of activities to keep children occupied and interested. Some play resources are easily accessed by children, enabling them to make choices. The daily session record shows a balance of active and quiet activities planned for, with daily use of the garden for physical play.

The relationships staff develop with children gives them confidence. This helps

motivates children to want to learn and be involved in activities. The staff know the children well and they use this knowledge in supporting individual children. A range of activities such as dressing up, role play areas and small world resources help support their imaginative and creative play. All children are able to explore a range of different textures. For example, babies and toddlers enjoy painting and experiencing the feel of jelly, pasta, shredded paper or cornflour and water. The daily routine ensures all children are involved in activities that help develop their physical, social and emotional capabilities.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff observe children's achievements and record observations. These help keyworkers complete the Stepping Forward assessment profiles that clearly show children's progress towards the early learning goals. From these, children's next steps in their learning are effectively planned for, with individual learning plans. Whilst children's interests and ideas are valued, they are not fully included within the planning process. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They interact effectively with children, supporting their learning throughout the day. They ask good questions of children getting them to think.

Children respond well to adults and form caring relationships with them. The older children develop good independence; for example, by pouring drinks at snack time and accessing the toilet as they need. Children generally communicate easily with staff and others. The staff use good methods of communication to help develop children's language and communication skills. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. Children 'read' to their friends and members of staff, telling stories from the pictures that they share with their listeners. They have regular opportunities to practise mark making and develop pre writing skills.

Children are keen to count and enjoy number activities. They recognise some numerals and shapes easily. A library activity gets children matching numbers and naming numerals, with some staff support. They explore measuring and weighing as they play with the water. During some everyday routines children's understanding of simple calculation is promoted. Children do problem solve, though opportunities to do so are not always fully recognised by staff. Children get to explore a variety of different textures such as cornflour, wet and dry pasta, jelly and porridge oats. They gain a sense of time and interest in the natural world as they water the seeds they have planted, look for creatures in the garden using microscopes or learn about the life cycle of frogs. They find out about their local environment as they go on walks to the beach or the shops. Their awareness of the world is supported by the environment and with resources that positively reflect the wider community. The older children have ready access to information technology. They enjoy using the computer with some children showing very good mouse control.

Varied activities, both indoors and outside promote children's physical abilities and creative development. Children have great fun as they play outside with the varied equipment. Planning for outdoor play ensures children progress. The use of other outdoor areas extends their skills for swinging, climbing and sliding. Some children benefit from tennis lessons, in addition to generally playing with bats and balls. This

helps develop their hand/eye co-ordination and enjoyment of physical exercise. Their imaginative play is encouraged in as they role-play hospitals or shops. The staff encourage and support children, allowing them free expression in exploring their own ideas in art and craft activities. Children enjoy making models from recycled items, creating collages from different materials or exploring different textures. They get to use musical instruments to accompany their singing and learn about rhythm. Some children sing spontaneously as they play.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff respect and value children as individuals, meeting their needs well. Children develop self-esteem and confidence as they make choices, assisted by the positive relationships with staff. As a result they have a developed sense of belonging. The use of individual learning plans means that all children are supported in making progress in all areas. Additional detail, fully discussed with parents and other involved agencies, is obtained to support children with learning difficulties or children for whom English is not their home language. Children have access to resources that represent the wider community. These resources help them develop a positive attitude to themselves and others.

Behaviour management is good. The staff know the children and use appropriate approaches. The staff use praise that helps children understand what they did well. Children learn to treat others with respect as the staff act as good role models themselves. Most children help tidy up or pour drinks for themselves. This enables them to learn responsibility. They listen to the staff and generally respond very positively. As a result, children are happy and relaxed. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children settle easily, helped by the good relationships developed with parents and carers. These are well supported by the key worker system and twice-yearly parent evenings. Newsletters keep parents informed about events and give helpful advice on a range of issues. The policies and procedures are available, but not easily accessed by parents and carers. Some detail is in the welcome booklet, though information about child protection is not included. The nursery has a complaints procedure; however, it does not fully meet the current regulatory guidelines, nor are parents provided with sufficient information. In the nursery, parents and carers of children under three years have a useful daily sheet that keeps them informed about their child's day. Records of children's development are shared regularly to ensure parents are knowledgeable about how their child is progressing.

Partnership with parents and carers of the nursery education children is good. The staff spend time talking to them about the Foundation Stage and how children learn through play. The displayed weekly plans let them know what their children are doing. They have some ideas of how they can support children's learning at home, though this only occasionally relates to individual learning needs. There is an assessment system in place to share with parents. As a result, they are well informed about the progress their child is making towards the early learning goals.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

A thorough recruitment process is in place, helping to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Children's welfare is safeguarded, as they are not left alone with unvetted adults. The required policies and procedures are present though some necessary detail is missing. There is a strong emphasis on training, with most staff qualified or on training courses. Children are well cared for by staff who are supported by clear routines and planning.

Children are looked after in an organised, welcoming environment. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities, working effectively as a team to give children a range of experiences. A member of staff in the younger children's group, allocated responsibility for the children accessing funded nursery education, ensures their learning needs are promoted. Children benefit from the good adult to child ratio, with staff and volunteers who interact with them effectively, at all times. Staff give children support and encouragement, as a result they are secure and confident.

Leadership and management is good. The day is well planned with an enthusiastic and motivated staff team. They have regular appraisals and their professional development is supported and encouraged. The nursery education provision is evaluated and monitored by the manager. Action plans are devised and acted on across a range of working practices. Everyone has a commitment to the nursery and to extending children's learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to consider ways to improve the appearance, tidiness and safety of the cloakroom. This referred to an area used by the out of school provision that no longer runs at the centre. This part of the building is now used by the crèche and the cloakroom area is clear and safe.

At the last nursery education inspection, the nursery were asked to continue developing staff's familiarity with the stepping stones and how to use everyday activities and routines to develop children's learning. Good progress has been made with staff working with the children having a secure awareness of the Foundation Stage. Good quality interactions with children during activities and play ensure children progress well. Individual learning plans, that take account of children's progress along the stepping stones, are used to assist planning that takes into account children working at different rates and levels, ensuring individual needs are met

Involvement with parents and carers in supporting their child's learning has improved with the introduction of parent evenings when assessment profiles are shared. Plans are displayed with some general ideas for the occasional activity at home.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received two complaints. The first related to Standard 6: Safety with regards to children being able to access an unsafe area in the grounds. We carried out an investigation on 10 August 2004. We took no further action and the provider remained qualified for registration. The second complaint was made in September 2004 and related to Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. We asked the provider to investigate the concern raised. We took no further action and the provider remains registered for registration. The provider has made a record of these complaints in their complaint record.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that the procedure to be followed in the event of allegations being made against staff or volunteers is written and clearly included within policy documentation
- ensure parents and carers are well informed about the nursery policies and procedures
- ensure that the creche room is secure when children are present
- ensure parents and carers are fully informed about the complaints procedure and record, in line with current regulations

#### **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 involvement of parents and carers in supporting their child's learning at home



- consider ways to involve the children more in the planning process to take account of their own interests and ideas
- consider ways to develop children's skills in problem solving

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