

St. Gabriels Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	319303
Inspection date	04 May 2007
Inspector	Judith Ann Hodgson

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Registered person	St Gabriels 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 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 Gabriel's Nursery was first established in 1996. It is owned by Kid 'n' Play Nurseries Limited and operates from a two storey building in Heaton, an urban area of Newcastle. The nursery serves families within the local community and surrounding areas. It is open from 07:45 until 18:00 Monday to Friday all year round.

The nursery is registered to take 101 children from birth to five years of age. There are currently 125 children on roll. Children are offered full and part time places. Twenty three year olds and 13 four year olds are currently in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children use three rooms on the ground floor and three rooms on the first floor. They also have access to an enclosed garden. The nursery has systems to support children with special educational needs and children with English as an additional language.

Children are grouped according to age. Four staff work directly with children receiving funded nursery education, three of whom, hold recognised qualifications in childcare and education. The nursery also receives qualified teacher support through the local authority.

The nursery holds a 'Quality Counts' recognised quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are developing a good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. They are encouraged learn good self-care at appropriate times through well established daily routines. For example, the children visit the bathroom in groups, monitored by staff, to ensure that they are effective in their hand washing routines before meals and after going to the toilet. Younger children are well cared for through the effective use of hand wipes, individual face cloths after meals and staffs use of aprons at nappy changing times. These steps minimise the risk of cross contamination. The staff are good role models for the children as they follow procedures for maintaining a good level of hygiene, such as cleaning tables before the children eat. The younger children are able to rest and sleep in accordance with their parents' wishes and their own sleep patterns. Their health and well-being is further promoted through a clear sickness policy and the effective management of children's illnesses. For example, children with an infectious illness are required to remain at home and other parents are made aware of the signs and symptoms of these infections. Most staff hold current first aid certificates and accidents are recorded. Although, written permission to seek medical advice or treatment in an emergency has not been obtained and could have an impact on the children's health in the event of an accident, the procedure is discussed with parents at the onset of care.

There are good opportunities for the children to learn about maintaining a healthy body. For example, they have a healthy choice of fruit, cheese or yogurt at snack time. When they are thirsty they can help themselves to drinks from the jug of fresh water provided. Younger children are offered drinks at regular intervals, throughout the day, which prevents them from being de-hydrated. They are offered a varied and well planned nutritious diet and are encouraged to try new and healthy choices at meal times. For example, most children are keen to try new vegetables at lunchtime as staff join them in their meals and discuss the healthy choices.

The children have many opportunities for physical development. They play indoors with great enthusiasm and enjoyment on the very good soft play facility, jumping from large blocks on to the soft surface, crawling through tunnels and negotiating and crawling underneath cylinders and blocks. Additionally, they play games and move to music in the large open indoor space provided. Children have access to this indoor play space on a daily basis which ensures that they have exercise when they can not access the outdoor area. Outdoors the children are able to run around, play games and use bats and balls, to further develop their motor skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where potential risks are minimized effectively by the staff. Risk assessments are completed for indoors, outdoors and outings which helps to ensure the safety of the children. There is a wide range of activities and resources which are suitable for the ages of the children, providing them with a stimulating environment. The resources are well organised and stored to enable the children to have free access. For example, furniture is child sized with low tables, chairs, shelving and drawers. This enables the children to choose and help themselves to equipment, such as books, games and construction.

The premises are secure and children are unable to leave unattended as there are alarms on the outside doors. An intercom on the entrance doors, closed circuit television and a signing in system ensures that visitors to the setting are monitored, which keeps the children safe. Children are learning to contribute toward their own safety. For example, by practising emergency evacuations, by being reminded to be aware of each other when engaged in physical play and through discussing road safety when out walking to the park. Some safety equipment is in place to protect children from accidents, for example, door guards prevent fingers becoming trapped and the toilet doors have safety locks. However, some electricity sockets within children's reach do not have safety covers and pose a risk to children. Documents, such as accident, incident and medication records contain all the relevant information to maintain the children's safety.

The children's welfare is protected through the staff's understanding of the setting's child protection procedures. Staff understand the signs and symptoms of child abuse and there is a written child protection policy which is understood by the staff. For example, keeping confidential records and notifying the designated co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is confident in implementing the procedure and approaching the relevant agencies. Some staff have undertaken training and share their knowledge with others through in-house training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy coming to the nursery, they confidently leave their parents and greet their carers with smiles and cuddles. Very young children enjoy access to all available activities as they are stored at an accessible level to enable them to have choice. Staff have attended training in the Birth to three matters framework and use this knowledge to plan interesting and appropriate activities for younger children. Staff sit on the floor to play with very young children. For example, two year olds enthusiastically make footprints with paint on large sheets of paper and babies are offered a stimulating range of objects to explore. Babies are encouraged to communicate as staff talk to them and reward their efforts with smiles and hugs. All children are included at group times, such as snack time, circle time and outdoor play times. Young children are encouraged to be independent as they are supported to feed themselves at snack time and are rewarded with praise for their achievements. The staff spend time talking to the children, listening to their ideas and responding to their chat. Consequently children are content and confident to approach staff and ask questions, they are settled at the nursery.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children use four pre-school rooms and are grouped according to their age. Social interaction between the children is fostered as they all take their meals together. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Staff have a very good knowledge of the children's attainments and record this in individual progress files. These contain details of the stepping stones achieved, the next target and photographs of the children involved in the activities. Staff use this knowledge to provide challenges and learning in the daily routine through questioning. Assessments and observations in the progress files provide clear evidence of learning but these assessments are not used in any formal way when planning activities which means that opportunities to extend individual children's learning may be lost.

There is a wide range of activities promoting most areas of learning and most children are motivated, eager to be involved in the choice of activities and enjoy their time in the nursery.

Staff encourage children to make decisions through sensitive questioning. Children play independently, selecting resources from labelled trays and drawers. They are confident, ask questions and explore books independently. They have a positive approach to new experiences and are generally well supported in their play by the staff. For example, when children were playing with a pirate ship, they were engrossed in making up a pirate story using the small world figures. Staff supported them by asking questions to extend their story. The children were very enthusiastic and concentrated very well throughout the game.

Children listen to stories both individually and as a group. When listening to the story 'I want a friend', children were involved in learning about what makes a good friend and were encouraged to talk about their feelings thus enhancing their vocabulary and understanding. Children have good opportunities to develop their early reading skills as they recognise the letter of the week and use actions to help them to remember letter sounds. Writing their names on pieces of work and signing their names on daily jobs lists helps children to use their early writing skills in a meaningful way. Children are beginning to understand the concept of mathematics, they count and recognise colour and shape. Incidental learning opportunities in the daily routine reinforces the children's knowledge of number. They count steps, bricks and cars in their play and are able to recognise shapes on the soft play equipment.

There are good opportunities for children to develop some of their creative skills as they join together to sing favourite songs regularly throughout the day. Their imaginative development is enhanced through play in role play areas and through a good choice of resources to encourage imagination. For example, they share pretend food in the house corner, they use road mats and vehicles to take pretend tours of the community and use small world toys. There are limited opportunities for children to explore art media and materials as an independent activity in the pre-school rooms which may restrict children's creative choice. However, staff take steps to address this as they provide timetabled art experiences as part of planned activities in the creative room.

Planned activities offer a wide range of practical experiences, which help to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. However, children have limited opportunities to explore and investigate objects independently which may have a negative impact on their learning in this area. Focused and adult led activities are presented in an interesting, stimulating and thoughtful way. For example, children dance to music whilst playing a number, shape and colour matching game and they are well supported as they use a mouse to draw pictures of their friends on the computer. Children's progress in information technology is good, they enjoy working on the computer and use the mouse with confidence. Adult-child interaction is good because most staff use open ended questions, listen and respond to children and meet their needs well. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and benefit from high levels of attention and support. The manager spends time with parents in identifying and establishing individual needs and ensures staff are used effectively to support children in their play and learning. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and children with English as an additional language are supported and activities are adapted to meet their individual needs. Children learn about the wider world as they celebrate festivals, such as Chinese New Year and Holi.

There are good behaviour management strategies in place, for example, the children are praised for good behaviour and explanations are given when behaviour is inappropriate. Positive comments and encouragement from staff consistently reinforces this good behaviour throughout the nursery. For example, when playing a number game the children cooperate and are thanked by staff. They are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to play happily within clearly set boundaries. Children benefit from well planned settling-in procedures which are based around their individual needs; this supports them in the transition between home and the setting.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents' views are sought from the onset of care and information given by the nursery includes details of policies and procedures and the Foundation Stage framework. Parents' evenings help parents and carers to learn about children's achievements and the next steps in learning. Staff discuss ways in which parents can help their children and become involved in their education. They provide books and story sacks for families to borrow and information on the current topic is shared. Newsletters sent home and notices on the information board keep parents and carers well informed about activities within the setting. Parents are welcome to view policies, progress files or to discuss their child's progress. Opportunities to speak to the manager or to the children's key worker exist at each end of the session and staff are eager to do this to further understand their children and to support the family. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The premises are well organised and good use is made of the space available. All staff, including the domestic staff, work well together and demonstrate enthusiasm for creating a healthy, safe and secure learning environment that aims to stimulate children of all ages. Children are well cared for by qualified staff who have been appropriately vetted to ensure that they are suitable and have sufficient skills and knowledge to work with children. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place, which support the safe and efficient management of the setting. There is a high emphasis on in house and external training for staff, as well as working with other professionals, such as those from the local authority. As a result, children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas. For example, implementing planning and ideas in line with the 'Birth to three matters framework'. Effective systems are in place for the recruitment of new staff and an effective induction procedure has been developed which includes all the required elements, such as Health and Safety and child protection issues. The manager and deputy manager can be called on, to cover any breaks or absences, as these staff are known to the children this minimises any disruption.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and staff work well as a team and share ideas for the future of the setting. They plan together, producing comprehensive long, medium and short term plans and detail the activities weekly. The planning process is currently being reviewed to improve practice. The staff share responsibility for preparing, resourcing and delivering the planned activities to the children. The manager ensures that the curriculum is balanced and that all children have opportunities in the six areas of learning. All staff members record observations of the children's responses to the activities and use these effectively to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals. The staff's knowledge of the children in their care is good which enables them to effectively challenge the children in their learning within the daily routines. Staff also effectively monitor and evaluate the care and education through monthly team meetings and whole staff meetings and have opportunities to exchange information within the team to improve practice.

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 the Nursery was asked to develop a strategy to encourage parental participation in children's developmental records, so that their knowledge of their children may be used in future planning. The setting has developed and is using a registration system that seeks parents views and knowledge which benefits the children through establishment of starting points for education.

They were also asked to evaluate meal times for older children so that it became a more social, relaxed activity in a calm environment and become a positive experience for all children. Meal times are now a social occasion for children as they take meals together and have opportunities to relax and chat with each other and staff.

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 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 written permission to seek emergency medical care in the event of an emergency.
- ensure all electric sockets are covered when not in use.

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):

- develop a range of activities to enable children to explore and investigate objects and living things to find out more about them
- provide opportunities for the children to choose creative experiences throughout the day

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