



St Marys Church of England Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402085
Inspection date	24 November 2006
Inspector	Greg Wolff
Setting Address	St Marys Church Rooms, High Road, Chigwell, Essex, IG7 6QQ
Telephone number	0208 5599574
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Registered person	St Mary's Church of England Nursery Committee
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 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 Mary's Church of England Nursery opened in 1994. It operates from one large room in the Church Rooms in Chigwell. The nursery serves the local and wider area.

There are currently 34 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 27 who receive funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.15.

Two part-time and three full-time staff work with the children. Half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. One member of staff is currently working towards a recognised

early years qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn to be healthy. They adopt good hygiene routines, such as hand-washing after toileting and before snack and after messy activities such as painting or collage. Practitioners record all accidents and obtain signatures from parents and carers to show they have been informed. A number of practitioners have completed first aid training to help them respond to accidents appropriately and procedures are also in place to care for children should they become sick on the premises. However, not all consents have been obtained in order to keep children healthy at all times.

Children are able to have snacks and drinks at set times and in line with their dietary requirements. Drinking water is available for children to take for themselves if they become thirsty. Children have healthy snacks and are further helped to become aware of healthy eating through planned activities and discussions.

Children have daily physical play either inside or outside, weather permitting. They enjoy being active, but the limited opportunities provided by practitioners mean that children are not able to be energetic during these times. They learn to move in different ways and use equipment, including a small climbing frame. All children are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their small motor skills by using a variety of tools and other equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children learn to keep themselves safe in the welcoming setting where they are able to freely move around the learning environment across the session. Practitioners are vigilant about children's safety and ensure this by the highly effective implementation of thorough daily risk assessments and suitably detailed health and safety policies and procedures across the provision. Children talk about safe practice; for example they recognise that they must not throw toys as they can hurt their own or other children's eyes.

Children are well protected because practitioners have an in-depth knowledge of child protection issues, recognise their role and responsibilities and know how to implement their own and local child protection procedures. The recording of all staff, children and visitors to and from the preschool, detailed policies for the collection and non-collection of children and arrangements for recording pre-existing injuries contribute to ensuring children are safeguarded from harm.

Children benefit enormously from the well organised and vibrant learning environment and an extensive range of equipment and resources is available suitable for the ages of children attending. Excellent procedures are in place to ensure equipment is safe and well maintained.

Children access their own resources independently across the provision, which helps to develop and sustain extremely high levels of independence.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children benefit from their access to a balanced range of activities and play opportunities that support their emotional, physical, social and intellectual development.

Children do not have to wait for equipment as there is plenty available to allow them to play alongside each other. Practitioners are not yet all familiar with the best practice guidance described within the 'Birth to three matters' framework but intend expanding their knowledge and skills to enhance the provision.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most practitioners have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The nursery's planning covers all six areas of learning. It provides clear links to the early learning goals for focus activities and demonstrates an understanding of the need to differentiate activities to allow for the range of children present. Less confident practitioners do not yet have sufficient information to assist them in promoting learning and providing appropriate challenge whilst children are involved in activities. All practitioners interact well with the children and are actively involved in the activities alongside them. They ask the children appropriate open-ended questions to confirm their understanding and prompt them to move on in their thinking.

Children's development is observed and assessed thoroughly during daily activities. Notes are recorded centrally and then transferred to each child's record of achievement towards the early learning goals. By observing children and their achievements throughout the session and not only in particular activities, practitioners ensure that they know where each child's development is at any given time. There is a clear link between the assessment records and planning which shows how they are continuing to meet the children's developmental needs at all times and help them take the next steps.

Children are keen to learn and actively involved throughout the session. They form strong relationships with each other and with practitioners. They make choices from the equipment available and are independent in their personal care. Children succeed at a range of puzzles, but are quite often operating well within their capabilities. Circle time is good and used well by practitioners to promote the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, communication skills and counting. The children also learn to confidently share events and experiences from their home-life with others. However, children have few opportunities to learn about or experience different cultures or religions.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to access few resources that promote diversity and equal opportunity for all. There is little acknowledgement of a range of faiths and cultures with the exception of well known celebrations at particular times of the year.

Practitioners work very well with parents, carers and other professionals to support all children, including those with special needs. They take time to gather information about each of the children's needs from parents and carers, which ensures that they are well supported in meeting the needs of all the children attending the group.

Children are mostly well behaved. Practitioners have adopted strategies to teach the children to behave acceptably, and are consistent and positive in their approach to behaviour management. Continued training ensures that all practitioners remain up to date with current techniques and they discuss and implement these as a team.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Practitioners keep parents and carers well informed through an abundance of information about early years, the Foundation Stage, planning and general practices in the group. This is made available in the hall and on the notice-boards. Parents and carers are made aware they can see their children's development records and termly meetings with their key workers are offered. They are told about topics and themes through newsletters. Practitioners also give daily verbal feedback and often write about the children's learning and achievements on work that is sent home. Effective relationships allow parents and carers to work well with staff to meet all the children's developmental needs.

Overall, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most required documentation, policies and procedures are in place. However, some consents are yet to be obtained from every parent / carer. Ofsted is kept informed about practitioner changes and the required checks are completed for new members of staff. The group induct their practitioners well, and carry out appraisals regularly. Staff training is organised to meet individual needs as well as the needs of the group to continually improve the provision. Effective deployment of practitioners ensures that unvetted persons are prevented from accessing premises or having unsupervised contact with children and that required staff to child ratios are met at all times.

The practitioners use the premises well to give the children plenty of space to play and learn and provide a balanced range of activities. This is enhanced further because the numbers of children attending each session have been kept lower than the registration condition actually permits. Although the outside area is used each session, it is not yet being used to its full potential as a learning environment.

The leadership and management of the group is good. Practitioners work well together to come up with ideas for planning which is then recorded by the manager. Although not all practitioners are completely confident in their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, training has been organised to meet their needs and those of the group in delivering their planned 'curriculum'. The manager has implemented a system to monitor the provision of nursery education and this is proving to be effective in identifying areas for future training.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the setting agreed to review the organisation of snack time, to nurture children's independence and mathematical skills through practical, everyday situations and consider the provision of a healthy variety of foods. Though the snacks are now healthy, the organisation of snack time does not yet allow children to become independent nor does it nurture mathematical skills.

The setting also agreed to update a number of its policies and these now meet the prescribed regulations thus ensuring that children are kept safe and well and parents suitably informed.

The setting also agreed to vary the teaching methods and materials within small group time to enable more children to participate in activities that extend or consolidate their individual progress in learning. Most of the practitioners now use a number of different techniques across the session to ensure that all children are able to access activities and extend their knowledge. Those who are less confident in the Foundation Stage are aware of their requirements and training is being organised to address these needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 01 April 2004 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):

- provide opportunities for children to take part in energetic play so that they can observe the effects of exercise on their bodies (also applies to Nursery Education)
- ensure that the organisation of snack time encourages independence and allows children to extend their mathematical development (also applies to Nursery Education)
- obtain all required signatures of consent for seeking emergency medical advice and treatment.

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 about different cultures and religions.

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