



## St Nicholas Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	143556
<b>Inspection date</b>	04 December 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Kate Houghton
<b>Setting Address</b>	Battenburg Avenue, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO2 0SH
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Nicholas Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Nicholas Pre-School has been established since 1962 and was registered in 1993. It operates from the church hall and is situated in the Copnor area of Portsmouth. The pre-school has charity status and is organised by a voluntary management committee. The day to day running of the group is the responsibility of the pre-school leader. A maximum of 48 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from Monday to Friday from 09:15-11:45 and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12:30-15:00, term-time only.

There are currently 72 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 65 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school currently supports two children with learning difficulties. The pre-school employs 15 members of staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's learning and understanding of the importance of healthy eating is promoted extremely well. For example, exciting activities, such as food tasting sessions, enable children to choose from an enticing and delicious range of food choices including fruits, such as kiwis, strawberries, bananas and oranges. Children's knowledge and learning is also increased during free play and focused activities. For example, food lotto board games, role play and creative activities, enable children to participate in purposeful learning experiences where they are helped to extend their learning and consolidate their knowledge about healthy eating in a positive way. Children freely access drinks because small jugs of water and cups are always available for children to use throughout the session, ensuring they remain hydrated. Snack time menus include a balanced range of choices including fresh fruit, therefore, effectively promoting their health and growth needs at all times.

Children are helped to understand that regular hand washing helps to prevent the spread of germs. Facilities for children, such as small steps and access to liquid soap and towels situated in the toilet areas, promote opportunities for children to develop their independence and practise hygiene procedures as part of the daily routine. Additionally, exciting and fun activities, such as watching a baby being bathed, develop children's awareness to the importance of keeping clean. This is successfully extended by staff for children to participate in similar activities, because role play areas are planned to include opportunities for children to bath dolls and re-enact their learning through play. Child friendly posters displayed in all areas encourage children to wash their hands and clean their teeth regularly. Informative and meaningful activities are planned for and introduce children to people that help them. The community dental nurse visits the setting to talk to children about the importance of caring for their teeth and conversations and discussions actively encourage children to share their own experiences of how they care for their teeth at home.

Children benefit from an extensive range of physical activities. Staff give priority to ensuring activities help children develop their physical skills in all areas. Children participate enthusiastically in play and enjoy access to large play equipment, such as slides, climbing frames and large wheeled toys. Music and movement sessions are clearly enjoyed and children are eager to participate. They join in confidently and use their bodies in a variety of ways, helping to develop their physical skills in all areas. Planned activities, such as mini assault courses, introduce children to fun physical challenges and also enable them to share their experiences with parents and introduce them to community sport groups, such as the local girls football team, therefore helping them to build positive views of how to keep fit and also raise their awareness of people within the wider community.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children enjoy warm, welcoming, clean and comfortable surroundings. Children's art work is displayed and arrangements in place ensure information for parents is clearly identified and

accessible to view. Staff consider the individual needs of children and organise the pre-school effectively. Low-level storage ensures equipment is situated and arranged for children to access independently. Identified areas for different types of play are very well resourced and provide age appropriate and stimulating opportunities for children to access a varied and balanced range of resources, toys and activities.

High priority is given to ensuring children are safe and protected from harm. Possible risks to children are reduced because staff are thorough and vigilant in ensuring safety procedures are followed. For example, staff invite parents to accompany the pre-school on outings, ensuring ratios are maintained and children are safely cared for. Formal risk assessments are undertaken in all areas and include daily routine checks on all toys, equipment and resources, reducing possible risks and ensuring children achieve safe play experiences. Systems in place promote the safety of children and help them to learn about keeping safe. For example, they practise regular fire drills and are gaining an awareness of what to do in the event of needing to evacuate the premises. Children are also introduced to local police and fire officers, helping them to develop their knowledge and identify people who help them.

Effective procedures in place ensure children's welfare is promoted. A designated named child protection co-ordinator is overall responsible for ensuring procedures and information is in place to support the needs of all children. All staff attend child protection training and as a result have a clear understanding of child protection policies and procedures, ensuring children are cared for safely.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are warmly welcomed by staff and enter pre-school happily. They are gaining independence and enthusiastically look for their names and self register on arrival, eagerly sharing their knowledge of morning routines with their parents and main carers. All children benefit from the close and trusting relationships they establish with staff. Children that are new to pre-school are sensitively cared for by staff and gain from the reassurance they receive, ensuring they are helped to feel at ease and separate from parents and main carers confidently. Children enjoy large group times together and are actively encouraged by staff to contribute their ideas and talk about special items they bring from home. Staff promote opportunities for children to learn about the world around them and use resources effectively. Calendars, symbols and pictorial representations depicted on daily routines help children to develop a sense of time and gain an early awareness of the days of the week, months of the year and changes in the seasons and weather. Children are engaged and occupied. They make choices about what they wish to do and benefit greatly from a varied and stimulating range of planned activities and free play, promoting opportunities for children of all ages to enjoy and achieve in all areas.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff use effective methods to find out about what children are interested in, what they can do and what their individual learning needs are because information is gained from parents and is used to contribute to planning, identifying where children's starting points for learning are. Staff recognise the importance of enabling

children to learn at their own pace and use their skills well, knowing when to interact to extend children's learning and when to stand back to enable children to lead their own play and develop their imaginations and ideas. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and undertake regular observations using information obtained to inform planning and monitor children's progress on assessment records, therefore enabling children to achieve the next step in their learning.

Children are clearly interested in activities and inspired by the extensive range of resources provided, supporting their individual learning needs in all areas. Children are focused and actively involved, enjoying opportunities provided to extend their learning and develop their skills in all areas. Staff promote opportunities for children to gain the most from their play and support children's learning using imaginative and creative methods. Outcomes for children are clearly identified and staff use effective and unique ideas to help children achieve and make progress. For example, children have fun and learn to use exciting resources, such as graters, kitchen tongs and hand whisks, helping to develop their fine motor skills. Children take turns and learn to squeeze the tongs together to pick up small objects. They observe the colour of equipment they use and know it is silver. Children are focused and enjoy the challenge of exciting tasks. They develop excellent levels of concentration and explore activities freely, helping them to develop their skills and learning in all areas. They learn how to grate a carrot and link activities with their own home experiences talking about how they sometimes eat carrot at home. Staff are interested in what children do and say and promote opportunities for children to share their experiences. Children are clearly fascinated by all experiences, responding enthusiastically and sharing their findings with staff as they talk excitedly about the amount of carrot they have grated and the size of the bubbles they have made.

Activities provided enable children to explore and experience an exciting range of different textures and mediums. Children thoroughly enjoy participation in seasonal activities, using glitter and glue to make decorations with and contribute their creations to the winter display. Children talk about what they are doing and describe how they are using different materials, such as cotton wool, to make a sheep. Staff recognise the importance of providing opportunities within planned activities for children to lead their own play and use their imaginations. In addition to resources needed for planned activities, children also gain from using other materials, such as junk modelling items, promoting opportunities for children to explore all materials freely and develop their design and making skills.

An exciting range of equipment is situated within the writing area for children to access freely at all times throughout the session. Children are industrious and busy, clearly engrossed and engaged in what they do. They make independent choices and choose from an extensive range of equipment, such as rulers, scissors, paper, glue sticks, Sellotape, coloured pens and pencils. Children are actively encouraged by staff to develop their emergent writing skills during planned activities and free play. They confidently make marks on paper and label their own work benefiting greatly from a range of opportunities to practise their writing skills. Children use equipment purposefully, freely drawing, writing and having fun snipping pieces of paper and using crayons to mark lines over the paper cuts they have made.

Staff use effective teaching methods to help children develop their interest in number and gain an early understanding of maths. Children are beginning to count confidently. They have fun

using an abacus to count out different coloured beads. Staff help children to progress and extend activities purposefully. Children continue to use other objects, such as coloured dinosaurs and eagerly count out the same amounts, helping them to recognise the total is the same as that on the abacus. Children learn to identify different numbers and observe a range of written numerals displayed on posters, printed in books and labelled on resources. Additionally, staff use clearly printed number cards during activities, helping children to recognise and say numbers in context.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children are valued and their individual needs are identified. Children access their comforters when needed, enabling them to feel secure and reassured. Information obtained from parents highlights any specific needs children may have. Staff know when to provide extra support for children and all children benefit from arrangements in place, ensuring they feel at ease and relaxed within pre-school. Staff promote an inclusive environment and ensure information is obtained from parents and used effectively to support children's individual care needs. They plan and provide a developmentally and age appropriate range of activities and play, enabling all children to participate fully. Staff work in partnership with parents and other agencies and establish effective ways of working together, ensuring individual needs of children are fully supported.

Children are happy, well behaved and sociable. Children's confidence and self-esteem is promoted very well because staff praise children frequently and give consistent positive verbal feedback, helping children to develop a positive self-image. Children gain from a clear set of boundaries and respond well to age appropriate methods used for behaviour management. Children benefit from the guidance and gentle reminders that staff provide, promoting opportunities for children to learn about sharing and taking turns. Children learn about pre-school rules and benefit from methods used, such as discussion and explanation, helping them to learn right from wrong. Therefore, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are warmly welcomed and their input and contribution to children's care and learning is highly valued by staff. Parents are actively encouraged to participate and involve themselves in pre-school events. They are frequently invited to share in their children's learning and participate in a variety of activity sessions planned by staff, such as the mini assault course and food tasting sessions, contributing to children's development and progress. Parents are informed and have access to a varied range of information. Parent notice boards enable parents to view relevant information and systems in place ensure they are in receipt of regular newsletters, including information about events, activities and any training undertaken by staff. Parents also share information about children's progress and are invited to view assessment records at regular intervals and are actively encouraged to communicate with staff and key workers to discuss children's individual needs and progress.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from an extremely well organised environment, detailed planning and clear and comprehensive policies contribute to children's health, safety, care and development. Staff are experienced and qualified and committed to ensuring positive outcomes for children are achieved. All documentation is organised effectively to ensure it is maintained for confidentiality and made easily accessible when needed. Records are detailed accurately and include all information required by regulation. Overall, the outstanding quality of the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is outstanding. The pre-school leader is committed to her role, ensuring the effective and smooth running of the group. Staff receive excellent levels of support and children achieve the best possible outcomes for care and education. She motivates and inspires staff, using her experience and expertise to develop a positive and enthusiastic team. The leader reviews the provision on a regular basis and is committed to the ongoing development of the staff and the future vision of the pre-school. Staff are actively involved and their contributions, ideas and suggestions for the planning and development of the pre-school are highly valued. Staff participate in regular team meetings and are actively encouraged to share knowledge and experiences they have gained from training and workshops.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care and nursery education inspection recommendations were raised to ensure all areas accessible to children are safe, good hygiene practises are in place for hand washing and records relating to day care activities are kept in appropriate detail. Recommendations were also made to provide more fun opportunities for children to hear, say and link sounds to letters and rhyme and to continue to develop resources to enable children to extend their skills in physical development even further, provide parents with planned opportunities to discuss formally progress and achievement.

Improvements have been made and effective systems in place ensure children learn about the importance of keeping their hands clean. They consistently practise hand washing after visits to the toilet and before eating, ensuring the possible spread of germs are reduced. Improvements have also been made to ensure all areas are safe. The flooring in the toilet area has now been replaced and repairs carried out, therefore ensuring children are safe and protected from any harm. Improvements have also been made to ensure details recorded in the complaints procedure are accurate and include the role and contact details of the regulator. Additionally, pre-existing injury records are completed accurately, ensuring information is consistently detailed.

Further improvements have been made to provide opportunities for children to take part in fun activities where they can hear, say and link sounds to letters and rhyme. Children enjoy singing rhymes, moving along to actions and participating in games where they can develop their listening skills, identify different sounds and develop their knowledge of letter sounds. Great effort has also been made by staff to develop resources and extend opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Effective planning and creative use of equipment,

enables children to develop their large and fine motor skills in all areas. In addition systems in place ensure opportunities are in place to discuss children's achievements and progress. Regular times are planned for throughout the year on a formal and informal basis, enabling parents to meet with pre-school staff and discuss, view and access information about children's progress.

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

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.

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action to meet the National Standards.

## **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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)