



St Nicholas

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | EY315320 |
| Inspection date | 22 November 2006 |
| Inspector | Margaret Baines |
| Setting Address | Squires Gate Football Club, School Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY4 5DS |
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| Registered person | Christine Anne Walsh |
| 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 Nicholas Pre-school is registered under a named provider who is also the manager of the provision. It has been registered since October 2005 within the existing premises and prior to this had been registered since 1996. It is situated in Blackpool and is next door to St Nicholas Primary School.

The setting occupies premises within Squires Gate Football Club and children have access to facilities which comprise of the one playroom with adjacent toilets and kitchen. There is an outdoor area situated at the rear of the building and a grassed area within the football pitch plus a grassed area at the end of the football pitch in the grounds of the setting.

Registration is for a total of 20 children aged two to five years. Opening times are from 08.00 to 15.00 each weekday during the year apart from Easter, Christmas and summer holidays.

There are currently 29 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions throughout the week including 15 children age three and four who are in receipt of nursery education funding. There are no children currently attending who have been identified as having special educational needs. There is one child who attends for whom English is an additional language.

The staff team of six is led by a qualified and experienced manager. There are five staff qualified in childcare to NVQ Level 3 and one who is undertaking training to NVQ Level 3

The setting receives advice, training and support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing an understanding of the importance of hygiene. They are learning that they must wash their hands to avoid germs. This is supported by good teaching from staff. Children are learning to manage their personal needs as they visit the toilets and wash their hands. Children are developing independence as they begin to care for themselves. For example, they know when it is cold outside they must wear hats and coats.

Their health needs are attended to because the provider has effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Children are developing an awareness of healthy foods and drinks extended through planned activities and in daily routines. They enjoy fruit and various other snacks, for example, bananas and apples, pancakes and toast, which encourages their enjoyment of nutritious foods. They know when they need a drink and confidently ask a member of staff for a drink or may help themselves from the jugs available. Children who stay for lunch bring a packed lunch. Plates are provided for children to place the contents on as they sit together and enjoy this sociable time.

Children enjoy the opportunities for physical play. They are eager to join in the music and movement sessions wriggling and jumping to the CD of 'Down in the Jungle'. Children are becoming skilled at negotiating their way around the room. Children enjoy the daily physical exercise which includes dancing, hopping and crawling. However, children have few opportunities at present to develop their large muscles by accessing climbing equipment. Children are developing an understanding of how they feel after exercise and what happens to their bodies when they are active. Children may take a rest on the small beds provided for this purpose should they feel tired during the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and safe indoor environment. This is planned to meet their needs by ensuring play areas are maintained effectively. Resources are readily available for them to make choices because staff plan the environment carefully.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff are skilled in the way they talk to them about safe procedures and reinforce safe practices as they ask children to pick up toys, not to run and remind them to be careful. The pre-school has a set of rules, which children are encouraged to respect. The setting has a health and safety procedure in place, which effectively minimises the risk to children and helps to keep them safe as they play freely. There is also a detailed risk assessment. The recently identified area for outdoor play is not recorded in the risk assessment at present.

The pre-school is welcoming to parents and children, being enhanced by examples of children's own work, which is attractively displayed. Photographs of children at play also reflect the positive ethos of the setting. Children are excited as they play in a setting where they can move freely and without restriction as they choose from a good selection of toys and play materials. The environment for children is carefully planned through staff's good knowledge, to ensure their safety and enjoyment in all aspects of their play.

Children's welfare is further protected because staff are clear in their role in child protection and understand their responsibility to contact the named person. The named person is fully aware of her role and the procedure she needs to follow should a concern be raised that requires a referral to be made to the local social services child protection team as outlined in the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school with enthusiasm, they greet staff and friends. They go to play confidently choosing from a good range of activities in the continuous provision. They demonstrate good independent learning skills. They enjoy creative play, they write, they draw and paint. The children are beginning to form relationships and make friends. They are developing good imaginative skills as they enjoy the role play, making cups of tea, cooking in the microwave and tidying the toys. They actively respond in group time contributing their ideas facilitated by staff questioning. For example, they share news about their families as they sit in the group. However, staff do not routinely question children to extend and enhance the children's mathematical thinking and calculation skills. Children are developing their listening skills as staff encourage them to take turns as they share their news.

Their curiosity and eagerness to play and learn is fostered through the organised provision of choices of play and the enjoyable focused activities. Children enjoy an imaginative and varied range of activities that help them to make progress in all areas of development. Their individual learning needs are assessed regularly but the observations are not always recorded daily. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and implement exciting activities and play opportunities for the children.

Staff are clear about what children can do and therefore, plan for the next steps within the planned activities. The children are becoming competent learners as they engage in a good range of activities, which are age appropriate and designed to help their development. Children have their care needs met well through the daily routines and the time given by staff to each child to support and encourage their well-being.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's individual learning needs are ably provided for by good curriculum planning that specifies the coverage of the stepping stones with consideration given for ability levels and younger children coming in during the year. Children's desire to learn is stimulated by the interesting and exciting activities organised for them to enjoy. For example, they are very excited as they share the painting activity where they roll a large tube in various colours of paint. They are learning to work in a group and how paint changes colour when certain colours mix together.

Children enjoy the small world play, for example, they explore the figures in the airport activity. The children love to model with the play dough. The present theme of nursery rhymes provides many interesting activities for them to enjoy. For example, they are enjoying the singing of familiar nursery rhymes and are learning to sing them from memory. Children eagerly select resources for their play ideas and freely move around the areas of planned continuous provision to settle to read a book, play in the home corner or the sand tray. Children persist at their play for good periods of time and concentrate intently in the group times that are well focussed by staff to encourage their sharing and listening skills. Their progress is assessed by staff, but not at sufficiently regular intervals. Assessment identifies the next steps in the children's learning. Information from parents at admission is used to begin to plan for individual children's needs. Children's specific achievement of stepping stones towards the early learning goals are recorded within their development records, but not in sufficient detail at present.

Children are making good progress in all areas of learning, supported by effective teaching that stimulates their curiosity and motivation to learn. They use number readily in their play and can count to five and some beyond. However, at present staff do not make sufficient use of everyday opportunities, such as snack time and group sessions to extend children's mathematical thinking. Their calculation skills are developing as they decide how many shapes are on the table. They eagerly identify shapes, for example, a square and a circle. Children have good opportunities to recognise numbers in the environment as staff ensure that the attractive number and letter displays are placed in position daily. Therefore, children can make connections in their learning. There are good examples of print in the environment, which are clear and placed at a height that children can easily observe.

Children eagerly select their name cards and place them on the wall of the registration house. Children are developing good communication, language and literacy skills as they eagerly use their good range of vocabulary to express their ideas during circle time. They talk about events at home and their future plans. They enjoy story time and music and movement, where they enthusiastically sing twinkle twinkle, and sing and dance to down in the jungle. Children are at the moment learning the songs for the Christmas party when parents come to watch the delightful singing.

Children are beginning to use their thinking skills to explain how they will build a tower and are developing their emergent writing skills as they make marks in the office, the home corner and are beginning to label their work. Children competently use tools as they make models with the play dough, they cut and stick in the mark making area and they paint at the easels. However, at present they have few opportunities to create using junk and waste materials as

storage is limited. They have opportunities to develop their imaginative and creative skills as they enjoy the role play in the home corner with the good selection of props. They pretend to make a cup of tea, cook, or simply sit and chat with friends.

Children enjoy music and are learning to sing songs from memory. They have access to musical instruments as they develop their skills to recognise loud and soft sounds. Children are learning through technology as they operate the electronic bugs, they use the microwave in the home corner and they play with the walkie-talkies. Children show good care and concern for each other and readily relate to each other's experiences and news. Their good self-esteem is encouraged by staff who foster children's sense of belonging to their community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are enthusiastically welcomed into the setting, they are valued and respected because staff ensure each child has the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the curriculum whether they attend daily or on a part time basis. The inclusion of all children is actively planned and monitored. The pre-school welcomes children from travelling families and also welcomes children for whom English is a second language.

Children are learning to take responsibility for their behaviour because the staff follow positive and effective strategies for helping children learn to manage their behaviour. Children learn the boundaries and guidelines because staff are consistent and are very good role models, having high regard for each other and the children. Children's behaviour is therefore very good as they learn right from wrong.

Partnership with parents in relation to nursery education is good. The effective partnership contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents are provided with comprehensive information, which informs them about the care provided. Parents' views are actively sought and they are provided with regular newsletters to update them on aspects of the pre-school. Parents learn about their child's development through discussion and strong links with their key worker. They are actively involved in their child's learning by providing detailed information at the time of the child's registration. They also update the key worker on any significant changes and development. Parents have the opportunity to enjoy set tasks with their child in their own home, which contributes significantly to the children's learning. Such initiatives create a strong link with the children's home.

The children learn about their community and other cultures as they engage in activities which promote their understanding. They enjoy playing together and learn to share as they wait their turn, for example, in the painting activity. They learn to manage their behaviour and are well mannered as they ask for a drink, saying please and thank you. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff team, who all hold relevant early years qualifications, have been working together consistently over a period of years. Several staff hold designated roles within the pre-school. The staff work well together as a team and this means that children are well cared for and involved in meaningful activities. Space is used well to create a child-centred environment. The adult-child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. The register of attendance shows the adherence to the conditions of registration.

Staff looking after the children are suitable to do so. Staff who are not yet vetted or volunteers and visitors are never left alone with a child, so promoting safety for children well. There is an understanding of the requirement for robust recruitment of new staff and a formal induction programme whereby staff cover aspects of practice and procedures. Policies have been updated to embrace the changes, which impact on practice and keeping staff fully up to date.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The registered provider and her deputy have a clear vision for the improvement of the nursery education with a strong focus on appropriately trained staff who are active in developing their knowledge and skills. She builds upon the commitment and experience of the team, undertakes staff appraisals and retains staff. This provides consistency for children and parents. The provision is managed and monitored effectively because areas are identified and acknowledged that require improving. Successes are also identified and measured against, such as the children's achievements, parents' comments and feedback from working with others. Photographs evidence the curriculum as appropriate for the ages and stages of development of the children and staff implement opportunities for children's learning and achievements well.

Practitioners are committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters and this works effectively in practice because children are treated with equal concern. Children, therefore, feel valued and supported in their learning. The registered provider works with others, such as liaising with the reception teacher within the school next door and sharing resources to offer children wider experiences. They are included in celebrations such as the school's nativity play so that transition from pre-school to school is helped.

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 registered provider agreed to provide consistent opportunities for children to be able to express themselves creatively through different types of media and in different ways. Also, the registered provider agreed to create more stimulating and challenging experiences for children in early writing skills, which can be accessed spontaneously as well as in focused activities. She also agreed to increase resources and access to existing programmable toys, which help children learn how to operate simple equipment. Children now have access to a range of creative resources which include paint, sand, water and role play resources. They also have good access to resources, which help them to learn to operate simple equipment, for example, the walkie-talkie radios.

The registered provider was also required to put into place a number of actions. She now ensures that the ages of the children who attend comply with the conditions of registration. There is a record in place of the hours of attendance of each child and the planning and practice using the 'Birth to three matters' framework has improved significantly. The registered provider was also required to comply with the conditions of registration in relation to the outdoor play area and to assess the risks to children in relation to the heaters used and the water temperature. Measures have been taken to ensure these areas fully comply with the conditions of registration. The registered provider also agreed to review the relevant policies and procedures in line with current changes. These improvements have significantly enhanced the care of the children in this setting.

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 complaint 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):

- enhance the existing resources to promote children's physical development in particular their large muscle development by providing more challenging and exciting equipment for the more able older children (applies also to nursery education)
- include in the risk assessment the area that is adjacent to the rear of the building and the area of the football pitch that is to be used for outdoor play.

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):

- ensure staff routinely question children to extend and consolidate their learning in both planned activities and continuous play

- provide additional resources to enhance children's creative development
- ensure the observations of children's progress are recorded at more frequent intervals to evidence children's progression through the stepping stones.

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