

St Mary's Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 224192 |
| Inspection date | 06 March 2007 |
| Inspector | Mary Anne Henderson |
| Setting Address | The Bungalow, Shaw Lane, Albrighton, Wolverhampton, WV7 3DS |
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| Registered person | St Marys Nursery Group - Albrighton |
| 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 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 Mary's Nursery opened in 1982. It operates from a bungalow in the grounds of St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Albrighton Village in Shropshire. The nursery serves the local and wider communities.

There are currently 28 children from thirty months to 5 years on roll. This includes 10 funded four-year-olds and 16 funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. The group is open five mornings Monday to Friday and three afternoons including Monday, Wednesday and Thursday during term-time only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00 and 12:45 to 15:15.

There are four staff all of whom have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification Level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher mentor from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play and involve themselves with their activities in a clean and well maintained environment. They know to wash their hands before eating and after messy or outdoor play and they do this independently. They also see that the staff wear gloves and aprons to prepare their snacks. Children's welfare is promoted well because the staff have a current first aid qualification and they have sought written parental permission to seek emergency medical advice or treatment for all children on roll. Children's health is possibly compromised because there is a toilet brush kept in the cubicles.

The children are learning about the benefits of healthy eating. For example, the children enjoy a good range of snacks including cheese, raisins, apples and bananas. The children have also grown their own vegetables and salad and prepared and eaten them for snack time. They talk to the staff about which food is good or not so good for them. Children enjoy drinks of milk and water during their snack time. However, drinking water is not freely accessible to the children throughout the session which could compromise children's health.

Children are learning about a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor physical activities, for example, they run around the school playground in the fresh air, throw and catch balls, and practice walking on small stilts. They also enjoy being physical through movement to music as the staff play the piano for them during indoor exercise activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are very welcoming to the children and their parents. There is a good range of child led art work and theme work displayed on the walls of the nursery for the children and parents to enjoy. There is also an interesting and informative parents notice board in the entrance hall. The children use a range of suitable furniture, equipment and toys suitable to their age and stage of development. The layout of the space and resources is favourable to children's learning. For example, children freely access the resources because they are low reach and well labelled and kept in defined areas so children know where to go to get what they need. This encourages child-initiated play which develops children's confidence and independence.

Children's safety is well maintained. The staff check areas before the children arrive and a comprehensive risk assessment format is used to ensure the safety of areas, equipment and toys. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe because they discuss safety issues through activities. For example, they have talked about the dangers of fire works on bonfire night. The children also practise the emergency evacuation procedures with the staff.

Children's welfare and safety is well maintained because the staff have undertaken Safeguarding Children training. They know what to do should there be a concern about a child and they have the current contact details of the Safeguarding Children's Board. There is also a policy in place to keep parents informed of procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are involved in the range of activities at the nursery. They have their own key worker who ensures the children can access and involve themselves in their chosen activities, supporting them while they play. Children enjoy a very good range of free play and adult led activities including messy play, outdoor activities, circle time, home corner and imaginative play, thereby promoting children's learning in all areas of development. Children enjoy good access to creative resources as they use glue, glitter and card to make mothers day cards to take home. Children's independence is well encouraged by staff. However, children do not pour their own drinks during snack time.

To support the development of young children, the staff have undertaken training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They observe the children and use the development cards to ensure the children are progressing in all areas of learning. Children enjoy the company of the staff during child-initiated play because the staff join in with their imaginary play and they read them books and support them at the craft table.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children access resources that are stored on low open shelving in well labelled boxes. This promotes child-initiated play, thereby promoting children's confidence and independence. The nursery provides clearly defined areas for children so that they can access their own play and learning opportunities. Children maintain attention well and are able to sit quietly and concentrate when appropriate, for example, during circle time when they take it in turns to listen and talk about how they might use the telephone at home. The children enjoy being responsible at the nursery and are involved in the routines of the day, for example, children pass out the cups and food during snack time and they welcome parents into the setting with a member of staff at the end of the session. They are courteous with their peers and the staff and say "excuse me" when they want to say something during group time. The children enjoy chatting with their peers during role play and imaginary play time. They help one another to put on the dressing up clothes and say "come on, come with me" as they move about the areas. As children discuss what they have been doing during their free time, they say "I did a drawing to take home to my family" and "I've made a mothers day card for my mom".

Children enjoy a good range of books in a welcoming comfortable book area. They have good access to mark-making resources which are available during imaginary play. For example, the children write on a low white board and on clip boards as they pretend to be policemen and pirates. The writing and creative areas provide children with lots of opportunities for painting, scribbling and for gluing a range of junk together to make their own creations. Children enjoy singing and rhyming activities with the staff and they share books and talk about dinosaurs listening to parts of the story that make rhyming sounds. The children explore mathematical concepts as they build towers until they become high and split them into two to ensure they do not fall down. They are finding out about the concept of time and the past as they look at the clothes they used to wear as young babies. They also explore the concept of time as they watch the sand timer run out during turn-taking at the sand and water play activities. Children count and look at groupings as they make numbers using their raisins during snack time. They add and subtract with the support of the staff who encourage the children to think about one more and one less when they count their raisins.

The children are learning about the world around them as they explore bubbles during water play. They look at various festivals throughout the year, for example, they have explored mothers day, St David's day and Chinese new year when they made pig masks for display. They have also planted and grown their own vegetables and salad and prepared these to eat for snack times. Children do not effectively explore information communication technology including programmable toys. Also, they do not have sufficient opportunities to explore a range of objects and materials that work in different ways for different purposes.

The children enjoy a very good range of physical play including running around the school playground in the fresh air with their peers, walking on small stilts and throwing, kicking and catching footballs. They also explore a range of indoor physical play as they enjoy expressing themselves through music and movement activities. Children have free access to a good range of tools and equipment. They freely access paintbrushes, pencils, scissors and glue sticks during creative activities. They also enjoy moulding dough and clay using their hands and a range of cutting and rolling equipment. Children thoroughly enjoy involving themselves in imaginary and role play activities. The resources are freely accessible and children can dress up as fairies, pirates or other characters such as Spiderman. They enjoy expressing themselves by changing their voices while taking on character roles.

The staff are excellent role models for children. They talk to the children in a quiet voice and encourage them to take turns at listening and talking. This creates a relaxing and accepting atmosphere where the children can hear and be heard. Staff spend much of their time directly with the children joining in and asking the children open questions to extend and consolidate their learning. The staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and they are suitably qualified and experienced. They know how young children learn, for example, they provide an interesting and varied curriculum and they ensure there is enough time, resources and equipment to extend children's learning and promote progression. They ensure that children can freely access the resources to make choices about what they want to do. Staff work well as a team and meet regularly to discuss issues about the curriculum and the children attending. Planning and assessment is good and the plans include what the children will get out of activities and which stepping stones are being covered through the activities. The planning is informed by what children can already do and the areas the children need to develop further. There are sound strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or whom speak English as an additional language. The staff have previous experience of caring for children who may need further support in these areas and they would seek the assistance of parents and other professionals to ensure consistency and inclusion of all children on roll.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have good access to a broad range of resources and activities that positively reflect diversity. They enjoy playing with a range of cultural dolls, puzzles, dressing up clothes, small world people and a range of books depicting people of other cultures and people with disabilities. The children also enjoy activities exploring a range of festivals including Chinese new year and St David's day. There are good strategies in place for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff would work closely with the parents and where necessary work with other professionals to ensure consistency and inclusion of all children on roll.

The children are very well behaved. They show regard for one another and are aware of the concept of feelings as they discuss and explore this during planned activities. Children learn

about the benefits of good behaviour because they are praised throughout the session and are involved in the routines of the nursery. For example, they take responsibility for counting out the cups, handing out snacks and they take it in turns shaking the tambourine to let others know its tidy up time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There is a range of policies in place to keep the parents informed about the service provided. Parents access an informative notice board which displays the last inspection, action plans and a range of information about the curriculum and planning. There is good two-way exchange of information between the staff and the parents who discuss issues about the child during drop off and pick up times.

Partnerships with parents and carers is good. The staff keep the parents informed about their child's developmental progression through discussion, confidential meetings and through free access to development files. The parents are also provided with 'Help Me' sheets which outlines how the parents can support their child's learning at home and how this relates to the stepping stones. All parents have received the groups prospectus which is in the process of being updated to reflect current practice and details about the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where they are encouraged to choose what they would like to do. Staff are experienced and qualified and have been appropriately checked by the management who have implemented rigorous procedures for vetting and recruitment. To ensure children's welfare, required documentation is kept up-to-date, accurate and signed by both parties. This includes accident, incident and medication records. There is an appropriate induction procedure in place which includes ensuring new staff are aware of the groups policies and procedures and that they are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The register shows the attendance of all children on roll and the staff. The staff check the identity of visitors and record the visit on the register.

Leadership and management is good. The management and staff team have a clear overview of the provision for nursery education and are aware of what they need to do in order to continue to provide, and improve on, good opportunities for children's development. Staff have evaluated changes made since the last inspection to ensure children's learning opportunities have been further improved. The staff attend regular training opportunities as supported by the management. This has a positive effect on the care and learning of all children. The provision for education is well monitored because the staff evaluate short, medium and long-term plans, observe the children at play and use their starting points to inform forward planning and encourage progression. All staff have a good understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity and they work well together to ensure the inclusion of all children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the group was asked to address two recommendations and two key issues. Firstly, they were asked to ensure that the fire department was contacted with regard to the fire door in the foyer and to ensure there is written procedures with regard to a child becoming unwell in the setting. The group addressed this by implementing the recommendation of the fire officer to unlock the fire door after parents have dropped their children off at the nursery. Children and adults safety is now appropriately maintained. The

group also developed the sick child policy to include information to parents about having to come and collect their child if they become ill during the session. Thereby ensuring children's health is maintained at all times.

The staff were also asked to provide opportunities to encourage children's interest in books and to ensure that the resources are effectively organised to enable children to make better use of the learning environment. The staff addressed this by encouraging parents to provide their child with their own cushion so that they would make better use of the book area, and the book area was also improved to ensure children can access books more readily. Children now enjoy good access to a comfortable reading area using their own cushions to sit on. Also, the staff defined areas so that the children could easily access the resources to improve learning opportunities. They made the writing resources and creative resources accessible to the children in the quiet areas. The children now mark-make and glue and stick a range of junk materials developing their skills well in these learning areas.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 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.

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):

- identify and minimise hazards with regard to cross-contamination and ensure children have access to drinking water at all times
- extend opportunities for children to be independent; this refers to pouring their own drinks.

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):

- extend opportunities for children to explore information communication technology and programmable toys
- extend opportunities for children to explore a range of objects and materials that work in different ways for different purposes.

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