

All Saints Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126969
Inspection date	27 April 2007
Inspector	Cilla Rachel Mullane
Setting Address	Shirley Hall, Church Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1PE
Telephone number	01227 282628
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Registered person	All Saints Nursery School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

All Saints Nursery School opened in 1976. It operates from a church hall in Whitstable. The nursery has access to the main hall, toilets, a kitchen and an outside area. It serves the local area and surrounding towns.

There are currently 63 children on roll. This includes 56 funded three and four-year-old children.

Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The group supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery school opens five days a week, in term time. Sessions are from 9.30 to 12.00 with an extra optional half-hour from 9.00 to 9.30 There are afternoon sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 13.00 to 15.30. They also run from 10.00 to 13.55 for two weeks in the school summer holiday.

There are nine staff working with the children, seven of whom hold an early years qualification, and all staff regularly attend short courses. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from a development worker and a teacher from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean environment. Staff employ hygienic practices to protect the children, for example, they check the toilet area regularly, and record that it has been checked. The kitchen is a hygienic place to prepare children's snacks: again a checklist shows that this area is consistently checked. Staff frequently remind children to wash their hands, for example, after touching a dog, and when they sneeze into their hands, so children are learning that personal hygiene is important. Staff explain how germs might make them ill.

Children relish the healthy food provided at snack times, encouraging healthy eating and healthy choices. They enjoy selecting and cutting their own fruit, and persevere at buttering their own crackers.

Staff regularly make the most of opportunities to help children learn about health issues. For example, a group activity involved comparing children's heights, and discussion about what they need to eat to help them grow. Children know about the benefits of fruit and milk. In the garden, children are challenged by the equipment, for example, using the pulley to lift objects up to the tree house, and using three climbing frames and slide for varying abilities. Children practice their physical skills and develop spatial awareness running around pushing 'wheelies' and playing 'follow my leader'. Fine motor skills are practised when children take part in activities such as picking up small pieces for collages, or re-potting plants in the 'Garden Centre' role play area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The outside environment is especially rich and stimulating, providing children with opportunities to develop gross motor skills when using the large equipment and learning about the natural world. For example, they enjoy growing plants and feeding the birds, having a peaceful moment just sitting and looking, and using their imaginations, such as going on a plane journey to Disneyland or having a picnic. Indoors, toys and equipment are thoughtfully set out so that children can make choices and initiate their own play. A great deal of thought has gone into making the book area a welcoming and inviting place for children, and finishing touches such as the lights were added as a result of asking the children what they wanted. The provision of an exciting role play area, supported by staff who are expert at extending children's imaginary play, enables children to act out meaningful scenarios. Children benefit from a good range of stimulating toys and equipment. Children's pleasure and interest is enhanced when staff vary the use of the equipment, for example, using kitchen tools with the playdough, and adding smells and colour to water play.

Children are kept safe within the nursery and garden because sensible safeguards are in place, risks have been assessed, and staff are vigilant. For example, the kitchen is out of bounds to children. Safe procedures are carefully adhered to, for example, parents come in by one door to collect their children, and leave by another, so staff can supervise this time and keep children secure. Fire safety procedures are especially thorough, with drills being held daily for a week, ensuring that all children and staff take part. Furthermore, the children understand the reasons for leaving what they are doing and vacating the premises.

Staff are knowledgeable about child protection issues and procedures, and have all attended recent training to ensure that they would know what action to take if they had concerns about a child. Accidents which happen in the children's own homes are recorded and kept confidential, further protecting children. Staff have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children really enjoy their time at nursery school. They often laugh out loud, for example, when staff joke with them. They are happy and settled, enthusiastic, well motivated, and keen to take part, for example, shouting to hear a well-loved story again. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and children are confident to approach staff for support, or develop their own activities. Children are learning to act independently, and this is especially evident at snack time, when they make choices and serve themselves. Children are interested in, and kept busy by the imaginative range of activities offered - the role play area especially holds their interest, and they ask for favourite activities, such as the shop in the garden. Group times are fun: staff make the stories come alive by the use of acting or story sacks, which the children love.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very secure knowledge and understanding of how children learn. They recognize that children learn best when activities interest them and are relevant to their lives, so they are led by children's interests. For example, during water play children showed an interest in the colour changes when food colouring was added to the water, and staff extended this activity, skilfully asking questions to make the children think, such as 'what will happen if....?'. They give children opportunities to practise and consolidate their learning, and allow them to persevere, explore and concentrate. For example, children spent time cutting up paper flowers in the 'garden centre' practising scissor skills.

The children's activities are planned, ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are covered equally. Furthermore, the rich environment provides children with opportunities to make progress in all areas of learning. Staff frequently observe the children, and record these observations under the areas of learning, so a progress report is shared with parents. They have recently introduced a new system whereby they use these observations to plan for individual children's next steps, and this is evolving well.

As a result of good teaching, children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children's personal, social and emotional development is well promoted. Children act independently at snack time, collecting cups and plates, pouring drinks, using paper towels to clear up spillages. They are settled and motivated to learn, and the environment is exciting, so children show curiosity and are keen to investigate and explore. Children are making progress with communication, language and literacy skills. Children enthusiastically ask for favourite stories, and confidently join in, telling the story. Staff skilfully introduce new words during stories, so children's vocabularies are increasing. There is a 'mark making' table where children can freely access pens and paper to practise pre-writing skills. Children's creative development is well promoted, especially in the role play area, which is used consistently and enthusiastically by the children. Imaginative themes, such as 'the garden centre' and 'the pet shop', are brought to life for the children by the use of real flowers to buy and re-pot, and dog biscuits to weigh and bag up.

Children learn basic calculation during songs such as 'five lovely flowers in a flower shop'. During water play, they learn about volume, and use mathematical language such as full and empty. Their knowledge and understanding of the world and the local community is increasing when they contribute to themes such as looking at the features of their local environment. They enjoy educational computer games, gaining an understanding of technology. They are keen to explore and investigate, for example, when mixing colours in the water tray. Children enjoy 'magic experiments' such as celery placed in different coloured water, and regularly checked on progress throughout the sessions, and so are learning about basic science.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff know the children very well, and so are able to treat them as individuals and respond to their interests. Children are learning about the world around them and their local community: they experience visits to places of interest such as the church. The nursery school, the church, etc., are plotted on a large wall collage, helping to make the children's environment relevant to them. Children are learning simple words and phrases in French.

Children behave very well, responding positively to the consistent calm, polite and respectful example of the staff. They are learning to share, and are often spontaneously kind to their friends. They are starting to take care of themselves and their own environment, for example when encouraged to clear up after snacks. They receive an appropriate level of challenge, and so are not bored, but play purposefully. Children's self esteem is good because staff consistently praise them, and show that their work is valuable, for example, by saving objects they have made to show their parents.

Secure procedures are in place to monitor and review children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) liaises appropriately with other agencies and supports parents. She seeks relevant training to assist her work with individual children.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are impressed with the friendliness and support of staff. Parents are invited to share information about what their child enjoys when they start the setting, and are invited to contribute to the initial and ongoing assessment of their child, because there are meetings which provide opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress and for them to be informed about their next steps for development. These consultations mean that parents are well-informed about the Foundation Stage the areas of learning, and their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning, for example, they are asked via a newsletter to support their children's understanding of phonics by playing 'I spy', and children choose story bags to read with their parents at home. Parents views about the nursery provision are regularly sought via questionnaires and staff act on their comments, resulting in improvements in the service to parents and children. For example, parents reported that they were not familiar with the complaints procedure, so they each received a copy. Also, they wanted consultations, these are now offered regularly.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The nursery school meets the needs of all the children for whom it provides care and education.

The nursery sessions are well-organized. Staff are deployed carefully to support the children's play and learning. The pace and routine of the sessions meets the needs of the children, for example, they play outside daily, they have warning of 'tidy up time' so that they can complete an activity, and the large group times are the right length to hold the children's attention.

All the documentation which is required for the smooth and safe running of the nursery school is well-maintained. For example, the record of attendance shows the children's actual times of attendance, and the registration certificate is displayed, informing parents of the conditions of registration.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Management ensure that staff have good knowledge and understanding of relevant childcare issues, such as the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, by enabling staff to attend training and short courses. Systems for planning and monitoring the educational programme are in place, and have resulted in positive action being taken, for example, the system for planning for individual children is evolving. Management have realistic views of the nursery school's strengths and weaknesses, and use an action plan to take positive steps to enhance the children's care and education. For example, improvements to the book area have resulted in the children gaining more use from this area. Management are guided by constant feedback from parents, and there is evidence that they have acted on their views and suggestions, for example, they introduced parent consultations as a result of parents' requests.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to improve children's safety by meeting the fire safety officer's recommendations, and by developing staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, particularly procedures to follow in the event an allegation is made against them. There is now a thorough policy for action to be taken if an allegation is made against a member of staff. Smoke detectors are in place, and tested regularly.

It was also agreed that the nursery education be improved by ensuring the routine and pace of the sessions, effectively retains children's interest, motivation and independence particularly during whole group times. Children are purposefully engaged throughout the sessions, their attention is held well at group times, and they have frequent opportunities to act independently, especially at snack times.

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.

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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):

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):

- continue to develop effective use of observations in order to identify individual children's next steps in learning, and use any information gained from observations to inform the planning of activities.

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