

St Matthews High Brooms Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127611
Inspection date	21 May 2007
Inspector	Melissa Tickner
Setting Address	St. Matthews Parish Hall, High Brooms Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9DA
Telephone number	07788 664560
E-mail	
Registered person	St Matthews High Brooms Pre-School
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 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 Matthews High Brooms Pre-School opened in 1975 and operates from two rooms in a church hall in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.00 during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 40 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are developing a very good awareness of keeping themselves healthy. They wash their hands after toileting and before eating their snacks and lunch, with running water. At other times a bowl of hand washing water is available which is changed on a frequent basis. Children understand they need to wash their hands because of germs. Staff adopt positive hygiene practices such as use of gloves for nappy changing and antibacterial spray for cleaning table tops. These aspects help avoid the spread of infection. Children understand they need food and drink to keep them healthy and give them energy and talk about why they need to rest after lunch.

Children enjoy trying healthy snacks on a daily basis at the 'snack bar'. For example they enjoy pieces of tomato, cheese, carrot and cucumber. Children help get involved in offering snack and they pour their own drinks. They eat healthy snacks which are varied on a daily basis and staff encourage healthy eating for children who stay for lunch and are bringing their own lunch boxes. These aspects promote children's good health. Children stay hydrated as they can help themselves to water or milk at snack time and water is available throughout the day for children to access independently. Clear systems are in place to ensure that staff are aware of dietary requirements, are able to deal with emergencies and illness and have sufficient first aid qualified staff present on a daily basis.

Children enjoy daily opportunities for physical play. Physical activities are planned and set up on a daily basis for children and they enjoy indoor physical play, such as use of the climbing frame, where they develop their skills in climbing, jumping, sliding and using a ladder. They enjoy other activities such as action games 'Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear' and planned 'PE' sessions. Outdoors they delight as they have the opportunity to use ride on toys, navigating around one another in the area that is available to them. These aspects help to ensure children are able to make progress in this area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming hall which provides plenty of space for children's play. However there is limited evidence of children's own work on display. Children have access to a suitable range of toys and equipment which are set up for them daily and rotated regularly. At times these are limited so that, for example, on occasions they do not have imaginative play opportunities. Some aspects of the organisation and resourcing require further development to ensure it is well organised and used, and inviting for children. Staff ensure security is very well maintained and informal risk assessments are completed. However these are not currently recorded.

Fire drills are practised to help protect children in the event of a fire although appropriate evacuation records are not being kept. Children are kept safe because staff supervise them very well, and encourage children to take responsibility for their own safety. For example, staff remind children of the rules such as no running indoors and they talk about why it is important to sit carefully on their chairs. Children are kept safe outdoors and clear procedures are maintained to help keep them safe on outings. The nominated person for child protection has a clear awareness of child protection issues. This helps keep children appropriately safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy at pre-school, entering the setting with confidence and enthusiasm. Young children are planned for in line with the Birth to three matters framework and staff support them well to help them feel part of the group and meet their needs. All children are valued and cared for in an environment generally organised to meet their needs. Children choose from a satisfactory selection of resources and activities, although at times these are limited in their range. However, children happily and confidently play with what is offered to them and benefit from close staff support.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff interact with children, talking to them about what they are doing and encouraging them to think. Most staff offer appropriate challenges to children and have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage of education. A clear planning system is in place however this does not currently support staff in being clear on the aims and objectives of activities. Staff take regular observations of children's progress and use these to help inform plans, and become familiar with children's individual abilities. Staff have worked hard to offer children a varied range of activities, however at times they are not attractively presented or organised and children do not always have daily access to particular activities such as dressing up and role play. In addition they are limited to making choices to within what has been set out for them. This can be limiting to children in offering a wide range of choices and helping them to make good progress towards all areas of learning.

Children are developing good social skills; they listen to one another, contribute with confidence and are developing good friendships. They are very independent as they pour their own drinks, help themselves to tissues when they need them and attempt to put on their own aprons. Children develop their mathematical skills on a one to one basis and in group situations. For example they count the numbers of boys and girls and develop their understanding of concepts such as more, less, same and different. Children develop their communication skills as staff listen to them and encourage them to contribute at circle time. They enjoy stories, and handle the books appropriately. Staff ask children questions during story time to encourage them to think. Children enjoy mark making and help themselves to a range of resources to support them although these are not organised and presented attractively to promote their use. They are encouraged to look for their names at lunch time and self register although they are not surrounded by a wide variety of print within their environment.

Children thoroughly enjoy playing with the dinosaurs in the wet sand, the bubbly water and the play dough. Other opportunities for exploration have included gloop, playing in the snow and exploring natural materials. Some resources to promote children's understanding of technology are available on occasions but not frequently enough. Children develop an understanding of their wider cultures by celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year, Diwali and St George's day. Children develop a strong sense of the place they live through regular local walks and outings. Children delight as they bath the baby dolls and use the towels to dry them and change their nappies and clothes as they wish. They have dressing up and role play opportunities on occasions, but not frequently enough to allow them to play imaginatively on a daily basis. They enjoy the art opportunities, which during the inspection they take part in creating an adult led blossom tree from tissue paper and other materials. Children draw pictures with crayons and pencils of their choice but do not have regular access to painting opportunities. Children enjoy contributing to and choosing songs of their choice when singing in groups.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are respected and valued as individuals; their needs are acknowledged and met. Children are becoming aware of the wider society through resources, activities and celebrations. Children are treated with respect, helping them to feel good about themselves. They show a strong sense of belonging, developing their confidence and self-esteem. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A nominated special needs co-ordinator is in place and clear systems are in place to support children. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are met. Staff have a wealth of experience of working with children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children progress well due to consistent encouragement and support. Staff use Makaton to support all children with learning the beginnings of basic sign language. Children respond to this well showing they are picking it up quickly and enjoying contributing at group times using this form of communication.

Children are well behaved and supported by staff that are consistent, fair and positive. They manage children's behaviour calmly and patiently which encourages children to respond effectively to any guidance and praise. Children are encouraged to feel good about themselves as they achieve, they are offered clear explanations and instructions and staff act as extremely positive role models throughout the session.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to be involved either by helping, getting involved on the committee or meeting with staff and key worker staff on a regular basis. Staff have developed close working relationships with parents and are extremely supportive to them relating to both the care and education of their children. Parents receive information such as newsletters, information packs, and informal termly meetings. In addition at the end of the year parents are offered a consultation to review their children's progress before they start school. Close links have been created with the local primary school which helps support parents and children with the transition from pre-school to primary school. Consequently, good systems are in place to enable staff to work in partnership with parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Organisation of the pre-school is generally satisfactory. A suitable range of paperwork is in place, including all required policies and procedures. However these have not been recently reviewed and contain minor omissions. Organisation and running of the session to enable children to achieve is generally effective however children do not always have access to a wide range of activities every session.

Staff ensure that ratios are met, and maintain good ratios at all times, enabling them to support children well. Systems are in place for the recruitment, vetting and induction of new staff however thorough paperwork around this aspect is not currently in place. A good number of staff working at the pre-school are qualified and all are police checked, although full evidence is not available for all staff reflecting these aspects.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff form a strong team and are committed to their roles, deploying themselves effectively and supporting children closely. They have regular staff meetings and are supported by a committed supervisor who encourages attendance on regular training courses. Appraisals and reviews have not yet been started but the supervisor

has plans to start these in the future. Staff informally assess the strengths and weaknesses of the setting but no formal systems have yet been implemented. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides care.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection in June 2004, the group were set recommendations relating to promoting children's independence, recording regular risk assessments, expanding toys promoting diversity and attending child protection training. Staff have improved snack time, now offering children plenty of opportunities to develop and enhance their independence. Opportunities for children to choose their own activities still requires further work as children are restricted to choosing what is set out for them on a daily basis. Risk assessments are completed on an informal basis by staff; however these still remain as aspects to be addressed as they are not being written down or recorded. Toys and resources are available that promote positive images, helping children to develop their understanding in this area. The supervisor and deputy have attended training in child protection, contributing to their efforts to help keep children safe.

At the last education inspection in October 2004, staff were asked to identify physical development opportunities in the planning and display a variety of written language. Staff plan physical play opportunities for children indoors and out on a daily basis, contributing to children developing their skills in this area. Displays of written language and print are still limited, although staff have plans and ideas they intend to implement.

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.

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 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):

- develop paperwork around required safety aspects
- develop, review and expand documentation, to ensure it is up to date, sufficiently detailed and in line with the National Standards

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):

- further develop and improve planning to support staff in their roles
- consider the organisation, accessibility and presentation of all resources to provide children with a learning rich environment
- develop and implement systems to effectively identify the strengths and weaknesses of both the staff and the setting

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