

St. Aidan's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	501092
Inspection date	08 January 2008
Inspector	Janet Fairhurst
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Registered person	St. Aidan's Day Nursery
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Aidan's Day Nursery opened in 1990. It is provided by St. Aidan's Day Nursery Trustees. It operates from a self-contained single storey unit adjoining St. Aidan's County High School in Carlisle. St Aidan's Day Nursery serves the surrounding area.

The nursery is registered to provide care for 43 children and there are currently 90 children on roll aged from three months to five years. This includes 24 children who receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group opens five days a week all year round. Sessions are from 08.00 until 18.00.

St. Aidan's Day Nursery has 19 staff working a variety of hours with the children. All the staff apart from one have early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3. There is currently one member of staff who is working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children play in a very clean and hygienic environment where good personal hygiene is part of the daily routine. Throughout the day staff follow strict guidelines to ensure all areas are clean. This ensures children develop high standards of hygiene. Children's good health is promoted further by a dedicated staff who demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of procedures to promote health and hygiene. Children have a clear awareness of their own needs and are developing independence in their personal care. They clearly understand why they have to wash their hands after playing in the garden and before meals and why it is important to brush their teeth. There is a stringent and robustly applied medication and accident policy. All staff undertake first aid training which ensures that all accidents are dealt with appropriately. As well as all the hygiene benefits offered to the older children, the babies in the baby room are further protected by the unit having a no outdoor shoe policy. This enables crawling babies to be able to play safely on the floor and for the floor coverings not to get contaminated with dirt from outside. The clear, detailed and accessible health and safety policy, together with the staff's extensive knowledge and experience, ensures children are protected from infection very well.

Children constantly develop and test their physical skills through taking part in stimulating, vigorous indoor and outdoor play. Challenging resources and activities cater very well for children's individual needs. For example, older children take part in weekly swimming sessions while all children participate in music and movement sessions provided by a dance teacher. Children develop a very positive attitude towards physical exercise, which is provided by dedicated staff who enthusiastically join in their games. Children who are not fully mobile crawl, roll and shuffle to get from one place to another. They practise new skills, such as standing, using staff and nursery furniture as supports. Young babies are cared for in an exemplary way. They build up excellent relationships with their key person. Their emotional well-being is truly fostered and they are very content, happy and settled. They rest, sleep and eat according to their individual routines.

Children's healthy growth and development are fostered well as staff show a clear understanding of the children's individual dietary requirements. Snacks of fresh fruit, such as grapes, banana and oranges, help to meet their needs for energy and growth. Children are totally involved with the preparation of food; the monitor for the day helps to chop and slice fruit and with help from an adult ensures all children have equal amounts. This approach greatly enhances children's understanding, enjoyment and willingness to eat healthy foods. Drinking water is freely available to all children throughout the day and milk is also provided at snack times. Babies have the same high standard of food as all meals are prepared from fresh ingredients and menus are designed specifically for very young babies and toddlers. Excellent use is made of the dietary information collected from parents before a child starts the nursery. Allergies and forbidden foods are clearly displayed in the kitchen and within the playrooms for all involved in cooking, food preparation or serving of food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

A vast range of extremely effective safety procedures indoors and outdoors ensure children are safe and well protected at all times. Procedures for collection of children are excellent and

ensure only known and approved adults can take children from the nursery. The premises are secure and the buzzer entry system means only known adults can enter the premises. Children talk about safe practice, for example, they recognise that they walk when indoors and ensure they do not bump each other when outside. They are empowered to take responsibility for their own safety. They are efficient at clearing up after themselves which is prompted by the excellent use of well timed verbal notification from staff. Staff are extremely vigilant about children's safety and ensure this by the highly effective implementation of daily risk assessments. Staff supervise children well and take appropriate safety measures that identify and minimise areas of potential risk to children. The nursery has an effective fire evacuation procedure and children regularly participate in emergency evacuation drills. The recording of all staff, children and visitors to and from the nursery, detailed policies for the collection and non-collection of children and arrangements for recording pre-existing injuries contribute to ensuring children are safeguarded from harm.

Children use an outstanding range of safe toys and equipment that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. These are stored attractively and children can self-select them easily and safely. Babies and toddlers have a wealth of opportunities to access natural play materials, from water play to the use of treasure baskets.

Children are well protected because staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities regarding child protection issues. All staff are aware of the nursery policies and procedures as well as those of the local authority. Ongoing training in this area ensures staff remain up to date with current procedures and changes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children arrive eager and happy to start their day at the nursery. Spontaneous giggling and laughter can be heard throughout the day and the atmosphere is lively and filled with a sense of purpose. Excellent relationships with all the staff and their key workers are evident from the time they arrive. Children are animated and enthusiastic as they make choices about their activities, which are extremely well prepared and attractively set out. Children are valued and adults help them to feel good about themselves by offering positive support, praise and encouragement. Staff's awareness and confident good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework is improving children's achievements. Children are developing good levels of confidence and self-esteem, which they use effectively to voice their choices, feelings and ideas. Their independence is fostered well, however, opportunities are missed to promote this further especially during meal times. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self. Early communication skills are well-supported through high quality adult-child interactions. Staff constantly talk to young children explaining what they are doing, which encourages children to link words and action.

All children are supported and nurtured in this warm and caring setting. Babies enjoy and benefit from attentive care in a homely environment, provided by staff who show a genuine commitment to their care, development and wellbeing. Staff have a true understanding of the key worker system and this translates extremely well into their practice. They demonstrate this through their detailed knowledge of each child, which ensures the children's needs are met very well. Through daily care routines of nappy changing, bed-times, mealtimes and play-times, each key worker builds a special relationship with the children therefore ensuring that they feel totally secure, valued and confident. Older babies' and toddler's self-confidence is effectively

encouraged and nurtured as staff introduce them to appropriate group time, such as singing and making meal-times a very sociable occasion.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. Their approach to planning is based on careful and sensitive listening, observations and reflection, thus enabling them to give the utmost priority to child initiated, spontaneous play that enables children to excel in all areas of learning. Children follow their own interests and staff build on this, allowing each child to take the lead role in their learning. Teaching is inspiring and challenging so that all children continually make steady progress within an exciting learning environment. The well-established daily routines and consistently high expectations ensure that children learn to do things for themselves. Staff are highly skilled at asking questions that encourage children to think and talk, as a result children's interest is sustained and their skills and understanding are developed extremely well. Staff build secure relationships with the children and understand very well their needs and preferences. Highly efficient staff deployment ensures that the children receive help, total support and very good guidance when it is needed.

Children are extremely confident and highly motivated. They concentrate well and spend lengthy periods planning and playing games together. Children eagerly participate in well-organised circle time, for example, using their own home link book they take great pleasure in recalling their Christmas holiday. They are secure in their relationships with adults and interact positively with other children and as a result speak confidently and express their ideas very well. They enthusiastically select activities from available resources and concentrate well as they complete their chosen tasks. The print rich environment ensures children understand that writing carries meaning. All children can recognise their names and write them with varying degrees of efficiency. Their early writing skills are enhanced due to the numerous opportunities for mark making in every day activities. Most children can identify the first letter and sound in their name and many other words. For example, some children were discussing their names and confidently expressed that our names begin with 'c'.

Children count competently and are beginning to recognise familiar numbers, such as those that represent their age. Children spend time sorting and matching items by colour, shape or size. The environment is rich in numbers and children can be heard to spontaneously count items for fun as part of their free play or preparing for snack time. During these opportunities staff extend the children's early calculation skills by asking questions, such as 'how many more cups do we need?' or 'do we have enough?' Children readily discuss and know the names of some two-dimensional shapes, for example, they identify circles, squares and triangles. They understand position in relation to each other and this is evident when children position themselves correctly in response to staff's instructions. Through an excellent range of both planned and spontaneous activities, such as baking and growing of seeds, children are beginning to observe similarities, differences, pattern and change. Visitors and outings broaden children's understanding of their local environment. Taking part in topics, celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year and raising money for 'Children in Need' develops their understanding of the much wider world around them. Children use resources for technology effectively and with great confidence as they have many opportunities to use a computer, cassette recorder, camera and other programmable toys.

Children exercise regularly in a range of fun ways. They show great skill as they manipulate equipment, attend swimming sessions and climb large outdoor equipment. Children's

imaginations are developed particularly well through the stimulating materials and activities provided, as well as by the lively music and movement session and story sessions. These experiences extend children's knowledge and skills effectively. Children show a very good level of precision in their handling of brushes and pencils. They demonstrate their manipulative skills extremely well with handling materials such as dough and as they learn to press the rolling pin and use cutters accurately.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a very calm and sensitive manner and treat children with total respect. They know the children very well and understand how to get the best from each child. Children have good opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world about them, through varied planned and spontaneous activities. They have access to a broad range of resources, play opportunities and activities which reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Children develop a secure sense of belonging and confidently take on responsibilities within the nursery, such as helping to serve snacks and clearing away equipment. The children get involved in making cakes and biscuits to raise money for 'Children in Need', developing their understanding of the wider world.

Staff consistently praise and encourage children and have high, realistic expectations of them all, resulting in behaviour which is excellent. Staff are consistent and use only positive strategies to help children learn right from wrong. Children are kind and caring and play exceptionally well together. Staff sensitively help children to resolve difficulties and praise is well used, which promotes their self-esteem and confidence. Children develop a strong sense of belonging to the setting and become very familiar with routines and expectations. Babies enjoy secure relationships with trusted adults, who listen to them and are attentive to their needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents receive easy to understand information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage. They receive regular newsletters outlining themes and events. They meet regularly with their child's key worker to discuss progress. Parents have the opportunity to become fully involved in their children's learning and assessment. Ideas for activities that parents and children can share at home make a significant impact on children's development. Parents complete details of their children's learning at home and this is included in the children's profiles. There are also extremely informative noticeboards to share additional information throughout the term. Parents complete regular questionnaires and this information is used to adapt practice to best suit the children attending. The information exchange is excellent, particularly in the baby and toddler rooms, where daily diaries known as 'boomerang' books are routinely filled out by both parents and staff. This provides an extremely effective way of sharing information and the children's care is enhanced by this arrangement, as both key workers and parents have a comprehensive record of incidents and experiences the child has been involved in.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children play in an extremely well organised environment where good adult support makes children feel secure and confident. This allows children to learn and develop extremely well and easily meet their full potential. The good use of time means children are always involved

in stimulating and worthwhile activities that support learning and social development. Excellent teamwork contributes to children having fun through positive learning and play experiences. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work very well together to ensure sessions run smoothly. They are vigilant to children's needs and ensure they are well supervised and ratios met. Staff are efficient, professional and organise a stimulating environment in which children focus on learning through well supported, purposeful play. They have a good understanding of how children learn and update their skills by regularly attending external and internal training. Staff are courteous, friendly and helpful to visitors and parents, and are excellent role models to the children.

All documentation is in place and extremely well maintained. The very detailed induction for new staff ensures all adults are fully prepared to carry out their role within the nursery. Regular appraisals and reviews support staff and help to identify training needs. A highly effective and well organised key worker system operates which secures the links between home and nursery and enables children's individual needs to be fully met. Very detailed policies and procedures are consistently applied across the provision to promote excellent outcomes for children.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The manager is highly experienced and extremely proactive, ensuring all aspects of the nursery run smoothly. She is extremely well organised and effectively leads a team of dedicated and enthusiastic staff. Well thought out aims for the nursery reflect a total dedication and commitment to improving all outcomes for children. Constant communication means staff can devise individual aims for each child's development and learning. The manager ensures that staff are very competent in delivering the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and effectively monitors and reviews the quality of teaching through weekly meetings and a 'hands on approach'. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to review the accessibility of play materials within the wet room, improve access to information with regard to children's dietary needs and review job application forms. All recommendations have been addressed. The resources within the wet room have been made totally accessible to children. Most resources are stored on open shelves and within easy accessible baskets and all are at the children's level. Information relating to children's dietary needs is made totally accessible to staff preparing and serving food and staff adhere to this strictly, ensuring children are only offered foods which are suitable for them. The job application form has been reviewed and amended. The improvements made have a positive impact on children's overall safety and well-being.

At the last funded nursery inspection the nursery was asked to increase opportunities for children to self select resources and plan opportunities for children to develop mathematical ideas and problem solving. Children are now able to self select as all resources are stored at their level on open shelves. Staff plan a balanced mathematics curriculum which now includes a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their mathematical ideas and problem solving skills. Staff teach number concepts well by weaving them into everyday routines. Children's overall understanding of numbers is developing strongly in response to challenging and regular practise.

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 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.

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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

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to provide further opportunities for children to develop their independence during meal times.

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