

St Mary Magdalene Independent Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY236697
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Inspector	Fran Fielder
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Registered person	St Mary Magdalene Independent 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 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 Mary Magdalene Independent Nursery opened in September 2002 and operates from a purpose built room attached to the Primary School. The nursery has access to the main play/activity room, use of the school hall and an enclosed outdoor area, with supervised use of the school grounds. It is situated on the A2036 on the outskirts of Bexhill.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday for 38 weeks of the year. Sessions run from 08.45 until 11.45 and from 12.15 until 15.15. An optional lunch time session operates from 11.45 until 12.15.

There are currently 31 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery makes provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the value of good personal hygiene. Effective daily routines and the staff's own good practice prevent cross infection. Children automatically wash their hands after visiting the lavatory and before eating. Appropriate arrangements for children who are sick prevent the spread of contagious ailments.

Children enjoy nutritious snacks such as strawberries and tomatoes or apple and cucumber. They also taste different fillings with pitta bread. This ensures children develop healthy eating habits. At snack time, children have a choice of milk or water. Children can ask for a drink whenever they need one and staff encourage them to drink more in warm weather. This ensures children do not become dehydrated. Staff take into account all dietary needs to ensure children remain healthy.

Children benefit from daily physical activities both indoors and out. A good range of activities keeps children healthy and helps develop physical skills. Indoors, they respond and move enthusiastically during music and movement sessions. They can follow and create a sequence of movements that show imagination. In the school grounds, they use skipping ropes, throw and catch balls and jump along a snake alphabet. In their own outdoor area, they climb and balance on large equipment and show very good manoeuvring skills when riding on wheeled toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The nursery is welcoming with bright posters and information for parents. There are displays of children's work around the room showing how staff value children's achievements. Children play in a spacious, bright and well-organised environment that allows them to move around safely. There is space for quiet and active play. The bright domino cushions make the book and rest area appealing. Children have access to a good range of toys and resources that are stimulating and age appropriate. These are in good condition and staff check these regularly to ensure they are safe for children to use.

The premises are very secure and it is easy for staff to monitor visitors to the nursery. A daily safety check ensures all areas indoors and out are safe. Good procedures keep children safe at all times. Children and staff have a good understanding of the emergency evacuation procedures because they practise regularly. Staff ensure all children wear hats and cream when playing in the sun. Children learn about road safety when the lollipop person visits.

Recent training ensures staff have a sound knowledge of how to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse. They know the procedures to follow and keep important telephone numbers easily to hand. This safeguards children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, confident and mostly independent. Some children relate well to each other and plan their own games. Staff encourage children to play together and share, although some

struggle with this. Lots of praise and encouragement develops children's self-esteem. Children approach staff for support indicating good relationships. Staff are very warm and gentle, making children feel secure and valued. The lack of circle time at the beginning of the session means children are not always aware of the purpose of the activities on offer. As a result, some children flit from one activity to another.

Staff help new children settle by introducing activities such as face painting. They encourage friendships and plan many activities that require co-operation. Children paint a large picture of a police officer or play 'hide and seek' in tents. Regular visits to the school make it easy for children to move from nursery to 'big' school.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plans show that all areas of learning are covered. They understand how children learn and plan a range of practical activities that are fun and interest the children. However, short term planning is weak and does not show the learning intention of the activities on offer. Plans do not include differentiation to cater for individuals or groups.

Staff make observations but these are irregular and not used to inform the planning. This makes it difficult for staff to identify children's stage of learning and support them in their next steps. Staff know the children well but much of the learning is incidental. Without secure knowledge of children's stage of learning, staff cannot support them sufficiently well to help them make good progress in all areas.

Children are confident and keen to learn although some lack challenge. Some children concentrate well at self-chosen activities. Some children help to tidy up and staff encourage children to take care of the resources. Staff adopt good routines such as giving children 'five more minutes' so they can finish their play. Staff put children's photographs on some of their work making children feel good about their achievements.

Children enjoy books and stories. Staff read expressively using different voices for characters and arm gestures that express the meaning of words such as 'whoosh'. The labels around the room help children understand that print carries meaning. They hold pens well and particularly enjoy using white boards and markers. Children learn to link sounds to letters and some are writing their name.

Children count confidently and use their fingers to represent numbers. They talk about numbers when making animal sock puppets as staff ask 'how many legs do dogs have?' There are opportunities to look at shape and create patterns with cotton reels and bricks.

Children dig in sand, and pour and fill containers with water. They love to use thermometers when examining the pets at the 'vet's surgery'. Topic work gives them some opportunities to explore using their senses. They visit the eco garden and go on bug hunts around the school. They have access to a range of electronic equipment. They experiment with sound when playing musical instruments and discover how these sound indoors and out. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to learn about different cultures and the wider world.

Children enjoy painting and drawing but the lack of resources sometimes restricts children's creativity. Many art and craft activities are adult led which results in 'perfect' work which is not the children's creations. Children love role-play and this is a real strength within the nursery. Staff interact extremely well and all become fully absorbed in making appointments and visiting

the vet. They dress up as doctors and surgeons and make the pets better through skilful diagnosis and application of medicines.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in an environment where staff respect and value individuals. Children taste food from around the world and there are sufficient resources that reflect all people in society. Children who attend the nursery come from different backgrounds, some of which are not fully acknowledged. Staff do not make the most of this as a way of helping all children develop a positive attitude towards diversity. There are good systems in place to support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff use pictures and signing together with spoken language as a way of developing children's vocabulary.

Staff manage children's behaviour well using positive strategies. Staff are skilful when dealing with unwanted behaviour. They use praise, encouragement and continual support to ensure children learn the value of good behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive information about the setting and topics through newsletters and displays. They find staff friendly and approachable and are very happy with the service provided. Policies and procedures are available but some are out of date and lack detail so the information is inconsistent with practice. Much information about children's progress is verbal as there is no formal system to discuss individual progress. As a result, there is little opportunity for parents to support children's learning effectively at home or to contribute towards the assessment process. Parents complete regular questionnaires regarding the nursery and staff act on ideas to improve the service.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. All policies and procedures are in place but do not reflect practice and some do not contain all required information. This means staff and parents do not have the most up to date information. Recruitment procedures are good but there is no formal induction programme for staff and the appraisal system has lapsed. This means staff are not fully aware of all procedures and training needs are not necessarily addressed. There is no system to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education.

The supervisor communicates very well with the staff to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the group. Staff organise space well to ensure children gain fully from all activities. All mandatory records are well maintained.

The staff team work well together and the supervisor ensures all are aware of their role. This ensures consistency of care for the children. Children are happy and secure. The generally good deployment of staff means children receive sufficient support. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the group agreed to update the child protection procedures and to obtain written permission from parents to seek emergency treatment.

The child protection policy now includes procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff. These procedures are available to parents at all times. This ensures parents understand that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The registration form includes space for parents to sign to give permission for the nursery to seek treatment in the event of an emergency. This ensures children receive treatment according to their needs.

At the last education inspection, the group were asked to develop staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage. This is a new staff team since the last inspection and all hold a relevant qualification. The courses attended all include training in the Foundations Stage. This means they have sufficient knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals to ensure all aspects are covered. This also means that children's progress is supported.

The nursery were also asked to ensure the planning took account of individual progress and that parents be encouraged to become involved with their children's learning. With a new staff team the planning system is still in the early stages. It does not yet include differentiation to ensure all children are challenged. This means children do not make better than satisfactory progress in most areas of learning.

Parents are involved in their children's learning in an informal way. They do not receive specific information regularly about individual progress or how to support their children at home. However, they do receive information through newsletters about the themes and topics within the nursery. This gives them some opportunity to support learning but nothing that relates to individual learning and developmental needs.

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):

- make use of family cultures within the nursery to support children's understanding of diversity

- review and revise all policies and procedures to ensure they include all relevant information and share these with parents
- introduce an effective induction programme and re-introduce the appraisal system

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):

- make regular observations to identify children's achievements and their next steps for learning and use this information to plan activities that meet group and individual learning needs
- introduce a formal feedback system for parents so they can contribute to their children's assessment and become more involved in their children's learning
- continue to develop the planning and implement a rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education

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