

St Marys Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 226478 |
| Inspection date | 25 May 2007 |
| Inspector | Janice Rizvi |
| Setting Address | St Marys Church Hall, St. Marys Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1EQ |
| Telephone number | 07790 519184 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Denise Patricia Driver |
| 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 Kindergarten opened in 1990 and is privately owned. It operates from the hall within St. Mary's Church Hall in Hinckley, Leicestershire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the Kindergarten at any one time. There are currently 34 children aged from two to five years on roll, of these, 31 receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as a second language.

The group opens five days a week during school term-time from 09:00 to 12:00.

There are seven part-time staff who work with the children, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Leicestershire local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of sound hygiene practices through well-planned daily routines. Adults explain to children about the necessity for hand washing. Older children are becoming increasingly aware of their own personal needs and staff offer good support to younger children in helping them to recognise theirs. Children can independently access the hand washing facilities with the aid of a step up to the wash hand basin after using the toilet. However when children are using the toilets independently, they share and use the communal flannels for drying their hands rather than the paper towels. This is a potential risk of cross-infection. Sick children are cared for appropriately. Parents are contacted and children are excluded if considered infectious.

Children enjoy healthy snacks as they make their choice of freshly washed fruit or small boxes of raisins from the fruit bowl at their café snack bar. This system gives children some flexibility to decide when to have their snack. Adults use a snack register to ensure all children have had a snack if they want one. Children have a choice of milk or water at snack time and water is available on request throughout the session. However, this means children are not able to independently access drinking water at any time, which potentially compromises their fluid intake levels.

Nursery Education.

All children enjoy physical activities. They develop control of their bodies through organised games, action rhymes and the use of indoor equipment. They learn to balance, extend their muscles and control their movement with the use of indoor equipment, such as the small trampoline. They have fun marching to music and playing organised games, where they run, crouch down low and pretend to be a sleeping bear in the game 'Isn't it funny how a bear likes honey' and 'Dingle dangle scarecrow' Children are developing an awareness of the effects of healthy exercise on their bodies as they feel their hearts beating faster after exertion.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from adults who ensure the environment is secure, interesting and relaxing for them when they arrive. Activities and resources, which are clean, safe and appropriate for the age of children using them, are displayed in an attractive way. They are well spaced out to allow for freedom of movement. Children's work is proudly displayed with their name and annotated with their comments, which encourages children to have a sense of belonging to their group.

Children's risk of injury is minimised due to staff's vigilance. Visual risk assessments relating to all child care areas are undertaken daily. Activities are risk assessed and adjustments are made where necessary. Access to the premises is monitored by adults and a visitor's book is used to establish a record of who is on the premises at any one time. Children are helped to keep themselves safe by adults reminding them of the day to day rules, such as 'one child at a time on the trampoline' this helps children learn to play safely and prevent accidents. Children eagerly help at 'tidy up' time. Lifting and carrying equipment to the merry tune of 'Hey ho, hey ho, it's off to work we go' They take part in regular fire drills and learn to respond to the

whistle and stand still to wait for a command. These rules and activities help children to learn and take responsibility for their own and others safety.

Children are protected from harm. Adults have a good understanding of child protection issues and of their responsibilities in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter with excitement and confidence, demonstrating they are very familiar with the routine and eager to learn. The environment is thoughtfully prepared and set out by staff to be fully inclusive for children of all abilities. Children fully participate in all the activities and particularly enjoy organised games, musical action rhymes and the well resourced free play environment. They use their imagination to represent events in their lives. Children freely select their name cards on entering and sit attentively as adults call the register, when they are encouraged to recall their experiences and share their feelings and emotions. Children's self confidence is increased by having a sense of belonging. Adults know the children well, which is reinforced through small group organised activities, where children have the opportunity to contribute their ideas, be aware of their own needs and show concern for others. They listen to adult instruction and behave appropriately. Adults carefully explain to children the range of activities to choose from at each session. Staff are sensitive to children's needs and give children a five minute warning before 'tidy up' time. Children respond eagerly to the musical prompt. This encouragement, engenders a team spirit for children to be helpful and work harmoniously in a group. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework for planning activities and assessing the progress of younger children. All children's independence and confidence is promoted through everyday routines.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress through the stepping stones towards all areas of the early learning goals. Adults have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and what children are expected to gain from their activities. Baseline assessments are obtained for funded children. Planning is detailed and clear, covering all areas of learning and all adults are fully involved. Children enjoy a good range of resources and activities. Initial and ongoing assessments are dated and clearly show how children are progressing. Adult's leading organised activities make regular recordings of children's individual achievements, which are then used for planning their next steps in learning. Children's individual needs are taken into account and adults are flexible when implementing any planning.

More-able children's concentration spans are very good. Some will persist at an activity until completed. They play well together, being able to take turns and knowing what is right from wrong. For example, when another child upsets them they do not retaliate but wait for staff to manage the situation. Children enjoy talking about their activities with staff and each other. Older children negotiate with staff and are confident in expressing their own ideas. Children confidently choose from the activities available and initiate their own play, but also ask for additional resources if they have not been put out. Their independence is encouraged as they decide when to take their snack.

Children are developing their competencies well across the four aspects of communication, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Less-able children enjoy making marks in a variety of ways and regularly use paint. More-able children write their names whenever they complete a

piece of art work and access the writing table independently. They select their name cards and freely sound out the phonic sounds of the letters, some children being able to spell out the whole of their first name. They learn to read and recognise simple words as they sit and listen attentively during story time. However, on some occasions younger less-able children become distracted and lose concentration when sitting in large groups and therefore not able to benefit and learn fully from the experience.

Children use mathematical language freely during their play. They are familiar with positional language because adults frequently use this with them. Children talk about comparing objects and can be heard problem solving, when comparing size, shape and volume during an activity on floating and sinking. Children able to create a sequence of patterns as they thread beads in alternative colours, copying from examples. They are beginning to make sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first-hand experiences in an interesting environment. They have opportunities to observe, explore, question, and be curious in a broad range of activities. Children begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. They celebrate each other's birthdays and learn the significance of different festivals and customs.

Children are beginning to learn about programmable toys as they punch in the numbers on the calculator and use mobile phones. They show curiosity and learn about different materials. For example, a girl says 'oh look it sinks' as she puts the metal aeroplane into the water. Children build and construct a wide range of objects using a variety of craft materials, cardboard and metallic paper. Children are able to be creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, role play and imaginative play. They use their senses and imaginations to create their own work and to communicate their ideas. One boy says he has made a bridge, a girl says she has not decided what hers is yet, but later, after gluing on straws to a box decides it's a crab. A group of children during free play sit together in a wooden train, on asking where they are going, they say, 'to nowhere land'

Children use a wide range of materials and tools to help them to express their creativity. They sing simple songs from memory, they clap to rhythm and copy sounds from the story, such as snoring, puffing, stamping and shouting when the wolf is coming. They experiment with texture and mixing paint as they learn to make pink with red and white. They use facial and body movements to express themselves and play out different situations in role play. Children freely make use of the space available in their play. For example, two girls arrange large cushions across the floor and lie down saying 'we are in bed' Children are observed thoroughly enjoying their session at the kindergarten.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed into the nursery. They learn about diversity and the wider community from outings and the good range of resources. Children are valued and their self-esteem is promoted. Practitioners listen to children, respect their ideas and often support them in carrying out the ideas in role play and activities. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. Exceptional needs of children are recognised and met sensitively.

Children's behaviour is good. This is influenced by the staff's calm approach and constant praise and encouragement. Any issues that do arise are dealt with quietly and without humiliation to

the children. Children are taught the consequences of their actions on others, which helps them in learning to play together and share.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. The Kindergarten obtains good information from parents to enable appropriate care to be given. Parents are provided with an informative prospectus that contains clear guidance on the six areas of learning, activities and routines. The setting actively encourages parents to be involved in their children's learning by displaying the focused activities for parents on the notice board. A lending library has been introduced by the Kindergarten, whereby children choose their book to take home for parents to read with them. Parents are kept well informed about what their children have been doing during the sessions and a good relationship exists between parents and the staff. This assists in helping children feel secure. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Most mandatory records are in place and underpin the smooth running of the service. However, the policy for uncollected children does not contain procedures in the event a child is lost, which is a potential risk to children's safety. Good recruitment procedures and ongoing suitability checks for staff are in place, with new staff undergoing an induction programme. This helps to ensure children's safety. Each term managers undertake assessments of the pre-school working practices in relation to the National Standards and make any necessary adjustments in order to improve standards. The adult to child ratios are maintained and at times exceed the minimum staffing ratios. This good practice benefits the care and welfare of children.

Leadership and management of funded children is good. Adults work well together as a team. The manager ensures adults feel valued and regularly consults with them during staff meetings. All adults have a good understanding of individual children's needs and make adjustments in the planning to cater for these. The management continually observe and evaluate their practices in order to ensure children receive a good standard of education. All this provides an environment for children that is conducive to learning and play. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspections of care and education four recommendations were raised. Firstly, to ensure staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. More frequent use is now made of the library, to obtain a wider range of books that depict positive images and reflect diversity of people within the wider community. Staff have attended courses on anti-bias, equal opportunities and have introduced some basic sign language, such as Makaton. Secondly, to ensure written records are kept of all medicines administered to children, and parents sign the record book to acknowledge the entry. Medication records have been reviewed, parents give their signed consent and staff record details of medication given. Thirdly, to enhance opportunities for children to increase their independence in everyday activities. The learning environment has been reviewed to enable children to have a free choice of activities throughout the session. A café style snack time is now in operation for children to decide when to have their snack, with opportunities to pour their own drinks. Children have also been encouraged to take the initiative in their self help skills, by independently accessing the toilet and washing their hands. Fourthly, to extend challenges for children in the area of word recognition so that more-able children become more familiar with

simple words. A wide range of labelling has been introduced. Children freely select their name labels at registration time and use these to copy and learn to write their name. Items and objects are labelled around the room. The free play environment is well resourced to encourage writing skills. 'Jolly Phonics' has been introduced with the sound of the week. A lending library has also been introduced to encourage literacy where children can choose their book to take home. The setting's attention to the above issues have improved the quality of care and outcomes for children.

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

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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):

- continue to develop hygiene procedures, with reference to communal towels
- ensure drinking water is accessible to children throughout all of the session
- review the policy for uncollected children to include procedures if a child is lost.

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 story time to differentiate between less-able and more-able children to maximise all children's learning.

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