

# St Nicholas Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130769
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Fler Wright
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Nicholas Church Hall, Saltdean Vale, Saltdean, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 8HA
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Nicholas Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Nicholas Pre-school has been registered for over twenty years and is managed by a parent run committee. It operates from St Nicholas Church Hall, in Saltdean on the outskirts of Brighton, East Sussex. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, term time only. Core hours are 09:00 to 11:30, although some children attend to 12:00 and some to 12:55 - depending on the amount of nursery education funding they receive. Tuesday sessions run from 09:00 to 12:00. Non funded children can do 09:00 to 11:00, 11:30 or 12:00 on this day.

The pre-school is registered to care for 30 children at any one time and there are currently 40 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 30 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school are able to offer support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs a total of six staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged to learn how to keep themselves healthy through well structured routines. They are able to use the toilet and wash their hands independently throughout the day, helping to encourage them to think of their personal needs. However, the procedures in place for hand washing slightly increase the risk of cross contamination. Children use bar soap and the same water to rinse their hands, meaning any germs are easily transferable between children. The vast majority of staff have a recent first aid qualification, helping to ensure children are well protected in the event of a medical emergency. Children who are infectious do not attend thus preventing the spread of contagious ailments.

Children enjoy a variety of fresh fruit for their snack, that is brought in by parents and shared amongst the children. Snack times are well organised, helping to ensure children gain the most from the experience. They are able to pour their own drinks from suitably sized jugs and also help to wipe the tables if they make a mess. Good manners are encouraged. Drinking water is available at all times from a jug and cups in the main play area and children confidently help themselves. This encourages their independence and gives them the opportunity to decide for themselves if they are thirsty.

Children enjoy a range of activities that develop their physical skills and contribute to keeping them healthy. They usually have free flow access to the garden, helping to ensure they get daily fresh air. They enjoy music and movement sessions, stretching up tall, crouching down small and dancing with ribbons. Children have access to physical play equipment every day, helping them to develop their physical skills. They ride trikes, balance on the see saw and throw and catch bean bags with ease. Most children's fine motor skills are developing well and they are gaining confidence when selecting and using small equipment, such as, pencils, or when threading.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a warm and welcoming environment with a variety of activities and experiences available to meet their care and learning needs. The dedicated quiet area is an inviting space with soft carpeting and cushions, helping to create a cosy atmosphere. The books are easily accessible and are displayed in an interesting manner, helping to encourage their use. Children have safe and independent access to a good range of developmentally appropriate resources that are put out each day, although due to the restriction of the environment, they are not able to access other items themselves.

Staff have a sound understanding of safety issues as regular visual risk assessments successfully minimise potential hazards around the pre-school. The premises are very secure, helping to ensure no unwanted visitors gain access to the premises. Staff deployment is effective and helps to ensure children are well-supervised and safe. However, the recruitment procedures in place lack sufficient detail. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed and all staff are never left on their own with children. However, no other checks are carried out if individuals are known to the setting, posing a potential risk to the children attending. Fire drills are carried out once a term, meeting the minimum requirements.

Staff have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures they quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in the child's best interests. However, existing injuries are not recorded, meaning the records are not complete in the event of a referral being made.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily and settle well. They are relaxed, confident and enjoy their play. They relate well to staff and confidently approach them for support, indicating trusting relationships are built. Children enjoy and learn from a range of activities and experiences that help to encourage their learning and development. They have access to good quality, stimulating toys that provide balance and challenge.

Children enjoy group times and behave well. They concentrate for extended periods of time, showing they are interested and well engaged. They help to clear up after activities and happily spend time using the dustpan and brush to sweep the floor. They enjoy playing in the garden when the weather permits and get much pleasure from participating in group games that help to encourage their learning, such as, 'what's the time Mr wolf?'. Children are interested in the experiences on offer and spend time concentrating on self-chosen games. However, the focused activities carried out each day are very basic, limiting the ways children benefit and learn from them.

Presently, children under three years attend separate sessions to the older children, although this is changing in September when all children will be able to attend all sessions. Birth to three matters is being implemented and staff ensure the equipment that is put out is suitable for younger children. However, there is no planning in place and although staff do observe children, they do not use the observations they make effectively in order to inform the planning and encourage children's next steps in development. This slightly limits the way children under three years are able to achieve. Despite this, children do enjoy their time at the pre-school as there are many experiences they are able to participate in each day.

Staff know each child well and are enthusiastic in their interaction with them. Their genuine caring nature helps to contribute to the way children learn. Staff spend time playing with children, helping them to develop new skills. They increase children's self-esteem by using positive interaction and generally use effective questioning and make helpful statements in order to further promote children's learning and development.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make sound progress towards the early learning goals as the experiences on offer cover them on a daily basis. However, the planning is very basic and is based on a rolling programme, meaning children's interests and capabilities are not taken into account. Activities are primarily work sheet based and adult orientated, as staff currently feel it is important that each child has something to take home with them at the end of each session. There is no capacity to differentiate the activities on offer for more or less able children, meaning children sometimes get bored of them and they are over very quickly. They get more out of the experiences that are around the play space, such as, the nature table or sand play, although these are not included in the planning. Staff make observations on children although they are not used to inform the planning, or to effectively plan the next steps in children's learning. However, staff know children well as they

interact and play with them effectively, reducing the impact this has on the way children develop. Each child has a profile that is supposed to record how they are developing under each area of learning, although they are not completed regularly, making it very difficult to see how children are progressing along the stepping stones. Not all children have clear starting points as initial assessments are not always completed upon entry to the pre-school, making it difficult to see how far children have come since joining the setting. Staff have the desire to improve the planning and would like to implement a variety of different methods in order to help encourage children to further enjoy and achieve at the setting.

Children are developing effective relationships and get on well with peers and staff, who listen with interest to their thoughts and stories and ask some open-ended questions to help extend learning. Children's independence is encouraged as they are able to choose what they would like to do and where they would like to go throughout the pre-school. They help clear up after activities and are encouraged to work together. Children are able to take turns and show regard for each other, especially at group times and when playing with the ride on toys. They show an interest in books as they are easily accessible and the sessions incorporate reading on a daily basis. They are encouraged to bring in books from home and staff read these books to the rest of the group. Story time before lunch is an important part of the day where children learn how to use their looking, listening and concentrating skills. Children are gaining confidence when writing their names, although they are not always able to do this for themselves as staff often do it for them, slightly limiting the ways children are able to progress further in this area. They know their letters, as the focused activity concentrates on this area of knowledge each day.

Many children are confident as they count and the equipment available helps to ensure their mathematical development is encouraged daily. Number songs and activities, such as, threading help to further encourage their development in this area. Children enjoy playing with mobile phones and have the opportunity to look at animals using magnifying glasses. There are few programmable toys available although staff are aware of this and have further items on their wish list. Children have limited opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions as staff do not feel confident in this area.

Children enjoy music and movement activities and eagerly dance with ribbons. They have opportunities to express themselves creatively as various mediums, such as, paint, pens and sand are freely available in the play space every day, although there is no learning environment planner in place, making it difficult for staff to record how they are extending these experiences each day. Children enjoy playing with coloured rice grains and describing what they feel like. They drop them from a height and say they sound like 'rain drops'. Children enjoy using their imaginations in the role play area by baking cakes and serving them up to each other. Overall, children are motivated, keen to learn and are enthusiastic in their play.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are treated with respect and are made to feel good about themselves. Staff take photos of children with their work, helping to celebrate their achievements and help them learn to take pride in what they do. Staff encourage all children to participate in the activities provided which ensures they have an equal opportunity to maximise their enjoyment and potential. They are beginning to place photographs of the children around the play space to help them develop an important sense of belonging. There are a basic range of resources available to promote diversity, although children do not have the opportunity to learn about different cultures or religions as staff do

not feel confident in this area. This limits the opportunities for children to increase their understanding of anti-discriminatory practice and the wider world.

There are two designated special educational needs co-ordinators in place that have both attended the relevant training to help support children in attendance with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They work closely with outside agencies to help ensure children's developmental needs are highlighted and progressed.

Children are well behaved and benefit from regular praise and encouragement from staff to help build their confidence and self-esteem. Children show an understanding of working co-operatively, of each other's needs and of responsible behaviour as they share popular resources, such as, ride on toys. They concentrate for extended periods of time at story time or song time, showing they are content and interested.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are happy with the care provided. They receive good information about the Foundation Stage, although no details of the Birth to three matters framework. Regular newsletters, an annual activity calendar and twice yearly parental consultations help parents to feel involved in their child's learning. However, children's profiles are not kept up to date, making it difficult for staff to feedback to parents on a very regular basis as these records make it unclear where children are at developmentally. The policies and procedures are available for parents and are discussed during the settling in process. All of the required permissions are in place helping to ensure children are cared for according to parental wishes. There is an appropriate complaints procedure in place, although it requires updating in line with current guidance and legislation.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are a range of policies and procedures in place that help to ensure the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. However, a small number of these require updating in line with current guidance and legislation.

There are generally effective methods in place for recruiting new staff and satisfactory induction procedures are carried out. However, the recruitment procedures in place lack sufficient detail. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed and all staff are never left on their own with children. However, no other checks are carried out if individuals are known to the setting, posing a potential risk to the children attending and breaching a regulation.

Children benefit from the skills and experience of staff and group times are well organised, meaning all children get the most out of them. Children are well supported by staff, helping to build their confidence and self esteem. Staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff are passionate about the pre-school and this is reflected daily in the way they interact with the children and the ways they strive to improve the practice. They make effective use of the self-evaluation process, helping to identify weaknesses in their provision. The planning is very basic and staff now recognise the need for further improvement to help ensure children's individual needs are catered for within activities by making better use of the observation and assessment system. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the setting were asked to devise and implement procedures to ensure new committee members were provided with information on their roles and responsibilities, to ensure staff had a working knowledge of all the policies and procedures included in the operational plan and to provide opportunities for children to be involved in deciding what resources are available each day.

Since the last inspection, an informative booklet has been introduced detailing the committee's roles and responsibilities although this requires updating in line with current guidance. All staff have their own copy of the policies and procedures and have a suitable understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff put out a good selection of resources every day and change these once a week. This means children have a variety of things to do, although due to the physical constraints of the building, self selection of resources is not currently promoted.

The setting were also given a number of key issues as part of the nursery education inspection. These were; to evaluate the organisation of 'circle time' to ensure good behaviour and listening was encouraged, to provide more opportunities for children to further develop their own personal independence and to increase the availability of creative materials to allow children to express themselves freely.

Circle times are now well organised and children sit for extended periods of time showing they are engrossed in the story or discussion going on. Children are also very independent and visit the toilet and wash their hands on their own as well as pour their own drinks during the session and at snack time. They are very competent with these tasks. Creative materials, such as, pencils, crayons, paints and junk modelling are available during each session helping to ensure children are able to develop in this area.

## **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):

- improve the hygiene procedures regarding hand washing routines
- ensure existing injuries are recorded
- implement the Birth to three matters framework or equivalent, to include regular observations of children in order to ensure their progress is tracked, their next steps are identified, and these are implemented in the planning. Ensure parents receive appropriate information about the framework in place.
- update the complaints procedure in line with current guidance and legislation
- increase the opportunities available to children to enable them to learn more about disabilities, different cultures, religions and the wider world
- ensure staff caring for children are appropriately vetted to ensure their suitability

### **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):

- improve the planning to include the range of worthwhile play opportunities already on offer within each session to ensure children are able to gain the most from the activities and experiences. Ensure the plans or activities include appropriate differentiation
- improve the system in place for observing children and ensure these observations are used to help inform the planning; and ensure children's profiles are updated regularly so that it is clear how they are progressing through the stepping stones at any given time

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)