

St Mary`s Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224194
Inspection date	12 July 2007
Inspector	Juliette Jennings
Setting Address	The Demountable, St. Marys RC School, New Park Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2SP
Telephone number	01743 363859
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Registered person	St Mary's 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 Mary's Nursery is located in a demountable building within the grounds of St Mary's Catholic Primary School in the Castlefields area of Shrewsbury, Shropshire. It is run by a committee. A maximum of 20 children may attend the nursery at any one time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 33 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting is open from 09:00 until 11:30 and 12:30 until 15:00 on a daily basis during term time only. Children can attend a variety of sessions, either morning, afternoon or full day sessions and there is a lunch club facility available from 11:30 until 12:30. The nursery currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff working with the children, four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and one who is working towards an appropriate childcare qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The provision for children to be healthy is outstanding. In particular, the outdoor learning environment gives them excellent opportunities to explore nature, spend time in fresh air, light and space, whilst experiencing the range of resources and activities that they enjoy. They learn about how things grow, what happens when water is mixed with mud or sand, how to manoeuvre bikes and trikes and what happens when they pour and explore with resources in the water. Staff follow good procedures which allow children to enjoy a clean and hygienic environment and to learn about keeping themselves clean and germ-free. Documentation is in order to record children's accidents or administration of medication and staff are trained in first aid, so know what to do in an emergency situation in order to meet children's needs.

Children's have very good opportunities to develop physically. They enjoy exploring the environment on nature walks, taking part in races for sports day, looking at leaves and other natural materials in the wooded area and watering and caring for plants as they grow. In addition, they have good opportunities to climb, balance, move over and under, through and in-between. This is evident when moving through the play tunnel or developing their skills on more complex climbing equipment within the school grounds. More detailed physical skills are supported because children use resources such as writing materials, manipulate puppets and playdough, pat and pour sand or mud and use paint brushes or fingers to paint pictures.

Children develop an excellent understanding of healthy eating. They choose from a healthy range of snacks such as a variety of fruit and fresh drinking water is available throughout the session which they can access independently. Milk is also offered within the snack provision. Children enjoy healthy packed lunches provided by parents and are supported to eat within a sociable atmosphere. The setting have worked very hard on their healthy eating provision, which has been supported by working towards an accredited healthy eating module organised by the local authority. Children's understanding of healthy eating has been developed through various activities such as themed work, displays, stories, tasting sessions and this has been further encouraged because parents have become involved through parents evenings and information sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's development is supported and encouraged because they enjoy a colourful, stimulating, child-orientated and accessible space. The areas that children use are bright and interesting and children are extremely confident, happy and secure in the space. Children have very good access to a wide variety of toys, resources, equipment and natural materials. They access these from low-level storage which is labelled very well, within a routine which accommodates a good mixture of free play and some adult-focused activities. The healthy eating project and the indoor/outdoor learning environment promotes children's learning very well by utilising a wide range of materials, resources and experiences to reinforce learning.

There are good systems in place for ensuring that children are safe on the premises, for example, a secure entry system, a visitor record and excellent supervision of children at all times, with good staffing ratios in place to support this. Thorough risk assessments are in place and daily safety checks are carried out by competent staff, which generally work in practice. However,

at the time of the inspection there was one electrical socket which was uncovered, thus potentially placing children's safety at risk. In relation to children's safety whilst accessing the outdoor areas, staff ensure that the space is safe so that children have very good opportunities to learn safely in this outdoor environment. Children are encouraged to think about sun safety when they are reminded to wear hats and take regular drinks.

Policies, procedures and other information are in place which help to ensure that children's welfare is promoted effectively. Training is accessed regularly and this helps to ensure that staff are aware of what to do if there is a concern about any of the children and there is a child protection procedure available which supports this role in highlighting a concern. However, it does not include information about the role of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Thus children's welfare is potentially at risk because staff do not have access to an up-to-date and comprehensive procedure to know what happens if they report a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children aged under three years are involved, busy and occupied with the wide range of opportunities on offer to them within this exciting and extremely stimulating environment. They are developing their confidence very well, and becoming skilful communicators and competent learners with skilled and enthusiastic interaction from staff. They thoroughly enjoy engaging in age-appropriate activities which encourage their physical and cognitive development. Examples include painting, exploring textures such as wet sand and mud and using wheeled toys in the outdoor area. Social and emotional development is supported through opportunities to play alongside or with other, older children. In addition, concepts such as sharing and turn-taking are reinforced through positive role-modelling and excellent interaction from staff. Staff implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively in planning for children's development and learning, using child-initiated opportunities to their fullest extent.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. Children are fully and enthusiastically involved in a wide range of activities and resources. They listen to and play musical instruments and sing songs in French and English. In addition, three and four-year-olds practise their skills in the sign language 'Makaton'. This helps to support children for whom English is their second language and enables them to communicate with those around them. Children consistently make decisions in their play. An example of this is when they decide to have a disco, using the flashing lights and the stereo to transform the play area, with staff support, into a great space for dancing. Some children choose to accompany the music with instruments and others watch how the torches make patterns on the ceiling.

Children benefit greatly from the organisation of the space for learning. They access toys and resources as they wish within the well-organised space and further their learning opportunities when they take their play out of doors. In this outdoor space, children explore and investigate what happens when earth or sand is mixed with water, they water plants and practice their cycling skills. In addition, children enjoy playing with puppets, painting and exploring playdough. They write familiar letters, count how many children there are in English and French and confidently sing songs in front of all of their friends. Four year olds are developing their mathematical skills when they predict how much sand they will need to fill up a bucket and then carefully tip it up to produce a solid shape. The use of the environment fully supports

children's learning and allows them to investigate, explore, extend and reinforce their learning, thus helping them make very good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children benefit greatly from staff's excellent knowledge and understanding of how children learn best, through valuable experience, exploration, creativity and discovery. Staff ensure that children have plenty of time to revisit their experiences, try out new things and develop their ideas in their play and this helps to securely reinforce their learning. Children relish their time in the setting and have an excellent attitude to learning, sharing their ideas of what they want to do and fully enjoying the child-initiated ethos of the setting. They are happy, settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session and are developing confidence and a strong sense of self through positive interaction with adults and through access to an exciting play space.

Planning fully accommodates and reflects this ethos of child-initiated play. Because of staff's thorough understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage, children make outstanding progress in all areas of development through the provision of a rich, stimulating environment. Planning is detailed and reinforces the opportunities children have for child-led play and allow staff to fully support them in their chosen learning experiences. Children's specific learning needs are accommodated within the planning system because staff implement focused activities to support children, with support from parents and outside agencies. In addition, children with English as an additional language are fully supported because staff actively seek to understand their home language and provide resources and opportunities to develop their English.

The assessment system is effective and clearly tracks children's development through the stepping stones, with the use of learning stories and observations fully supporting these progress records. In addition, children's progress is enhanced by staff's expert knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. The staff have a clear knowledge about what children need to do next in order to make progress and this is reflected in their interaction with them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. Staff have a solid understanding of the processes to follow where there is a concern about children's development. In addition, effective procedures are implemented to allow children to develop at their own pace, within an inclusive environment. Staff know where they can seek advice or support and work closely with parents to support children's needs. Staff are competent at drawing up specific focused plans for children's learning and involve parents in this process. They access specialist equipment and dual language resources where appropriate to support children's individual needs.

Children are happy, enthusiastic, busy, occupied, keen and interested to learn. They motivate themselves very well and enjoy the wide range of activities which are accessed in free play or are provided by staff. Staff use good techniques to foster positive behaviour, such as distraction, discussion, encouragement of independence and choice and positive praise. The ethos of child-initiated learning fully supports independence and this allows for a relaxed, yet busy environment where children rarely become bored. Therefore, there is very little unwanted behaviour, but where there is it is dealt with in a sympathetic, consistent and age-appropriate manner. Children are constantly praised and their efforts are acknowledged. For example, their

work is displayed in a stimulating and colourful manner and they are regularly and consistently praised for their efforts.

Children's understanding of diversity and the world around them is promoted extremely well through discussion, themed work and age-appropriate activities. Their individual needs are accommodated well and supported within the daily routine of the setting because staff know their personalities, likes and dislikes and ensure constant discussion with parents to support this. Independence is supported very well and children confidently make decisions about what they want to do within the indoor/outdoor learning space. They have excellent opportunities to develop their independence, self-esteem and sense of self through making choices and using the child-initiated routine to its fullest extent. Staff are very good at giving the children choices and encouraging them to make decisions about the nursery space. For example, staff ask children where they would like their snack, whether they would like to change the books and how they would like the routine of the session to flow. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. There are very good procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for consistently and in accordance with their parent's wishes. This is enhanced by daily verbal feedback to ensure that parents are informed about what their children have been doing whilst attending. Consistent verbal feedback and availability of written plans helps to ensure that parents of three and four-year-olds know about what their children have been doing whilst attending. In addition, they are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning through being informed of themed activities, being invited to themed evenings to support projects such as healthy eating. They know about their child's achievements through regular meetings with key persons. Parents also have good opportunities to be involved in trips out, social events with staff and fundraising. In addition, the setting continues to develop ways of involving parents in their children's learning and enabling them to pass on what they know about their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The relationship between the staff team is very strong and all have a clear overview of the setting as a whole, knowing their roles and responsibilities for providing an interesting and exciting provision for children's learning. Staff's expert knowledge of how to implement the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage fully enables children to make outstanding progress in all areas of development. This is further supported by regular and consistent access to training, with the knowledge that staff gain from this training used very well to implement changes to the educational provision. This, in turn, means that standards continue to improve, offering children a very positive experience in nursery education. For example, there has been a recent change in the organisation of the space to accommodate a child-initiated learning both indoors and outdoors. This has worked very well and the result is that children are learning extremely effectively through their play and through the wide variety of experiences on offer. This forward thinking and commitment to training has been particularly effective in the 'Healthy Eating' initiative, where staff have enthusiastically embraced this exciting learning opportunity and enabled children to extend their learning and understanding of this aspect.

All documentation is in good order and in line with requirements. Paperwork is stored securely on site, ensuring children's information remains confidential. Children are cared for in line with parents' wishes, with appropriate consents and detailed information obtained from them prior

to the children starting at the setting. Policies and procedures are in place and are reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they continue to work in practice. The setting are currently developing their operational plan so that all information is held in one file, so that it can be more effectively accessed as required. The organisation of the space fully accommodates children's needs and allows them to develop and learn in a child-orientated, exciting and stimulating environment. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the setting were asked to provide more detail within the lost child procedure and the child protection procedure. This has been implemented within the appropriate policies thus ensuring children's welfare and safety.

At the previous nursery education inspection, the setting were asked to improve the labelling in both English and French to further support children's language development. This has been implemented so that children have good opportunities to develop their linking of sounds and letters and understanding of other languages.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 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 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 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 sure that daily safety checks are rigorous to ensure children's safety
- include information about the role of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in the child protection statement so that children's welfare can be fully supported by staff who know what will happen if they report a concern.

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