

St Mary's Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	220164
Inspection date	03 December 2007
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting Address	Towcester Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN4 8EZ
Telephone number	01604 767923
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Registered person	The Trustees of St Mary'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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Mary's Day Nursery is managed by a voluntary management committee and is a registered charity. It was established in 1981 and operates from two main rooms in a church building. It is situated in the Far Cotton area of Northampton. A maximum of 36 children may attend the nursery at any one time. It is open each weekday throughout the year, except for public holidays and Christmas. Sessions are from 08:00 to 17:45. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 62 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for early education. The nursery serves the local and neighbouring community. It currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and is able to support children who have disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 12 members of staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting has achieved stage one of the Pre-School Learning Alliance 'Aiming for Quality' accreditation scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is consistently promoted because staff have a thorough understanding of this area. There are good daily hygiene procedures in place which minimise the spread of infection, for example staff wear appropriate protective clothing when changing nappies, and children wash their hands after using the bathroom and before snack time. They are gaining some understanding of the relevance of good personal hygiene because staff sometimes discuss these issues with them and they have covered related topic work. However, their understanding is not fully promoted as they do not consistently discuss these issues. Children's health in an emergency situation is promoted because first aid qualifications are held by all staff members. The spread of infection is further minimised because there is clear guidance regarding action to be taken in the event of a child becoming ill whilst at the setting and also covering the exclusion of children who are unwell.

Children's health and development are further promoted as they are offered a range of healthy snacks and meals. Menus are planned in advance and are adjusted according to the season. They contain a balanced range of all food types including fresh fruit and vegetables and are cooked daily on the premises. Snack and meal times provide additional learning opportunities, where children are able to gain valuable social skills. They sit in small groups and help serve their snacks and drinks. However, their independence is not fully promoted as they are not involved in tasks such as clearing away. Allergies and special diets are clearly recorded and staff have implemented a stringent system to ensure that children are only offered the correct food and drinks.

Children's physical development is well promoted and they are offered a wide variety of activities. They are able to develop control of their bodies and improve skills such as balance, co-ordination and control as they pedal tricycles, use large play equipment, throw and catch balls and balance on scooters. Good use is made of space within the setting to provide physical activities during poor weather. For example, children enjoy playing parachute games in the large hall. They also enjoy structured sessions such as music and movement and action rhymes. Children have good opportunities to develop finer skills and physical movements through their involvement in a range of activities. For example, children participating in a craft activity use scissors and glue spreaders, hold pencils correctly and manipulate small craft pieces.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where there are colourful displays of their work, helping them to feel comfortable and valued. Their daily safety is given a high priority as staff have a good understanding of this area. They carry out daily checks to identify potential hazards, taking appropriate steps to minimise or remove these. This helps to ensure that children are able to move freely and independently around the setting and from one activity to another. The consistent daily implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of all safety practices and are able to promote children's safety. For example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised frequently.

Children are gaining a good understanding of safety issues and how to keep themselves and others safe. They are given clear explanations by staff to reinforce their understanding and

have had visits from police officers and the fire service. Children are able to use a wide range of toys and resources. These are well-organised and easily accessible so that they are able to make choices about their play. For example, storage containers are clearly labelled with both words and pictures. Children's welfare is appropriately promoted because staff have a thorough understanding of their duties regarding safeguarding children. They have ensured that they have up-to-date information regarding current procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, secure and settled. They come in happily at the start of the sessions, separating well from their parents and carers and eagerly exploring the activities and play resources. They have good relationships with each other and with staff, talking animatedly about their play, activities and recent experiences. Children's play is enhanced and their learning is extended because staff show children that they genuinely enjoy their company and are skilled in joining in with their play. For example, a member of staff encourages children to count the construction blocks and name the colours as they build with them.

The needs of younger children are clearly recognised and their overall development is promoted because all activity plans, assessments and evaluations for this age group are cross-referenced to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff have attended training and use this framework confidently to ensure that children are offered a balanced range of activities and play opportunities. Children's learning experiences are enhanced because staff pay attention to details. For example, they have put together books covering a range of topics and containing examples of children's work and their photographs. Children enjoy looking through these books which detail subjects such as messy play, feelings, role play and textures.

Children happily choose their activities and organise their play throughout the sessions. They are confident and have high self-esteem because staff support them well and offer appropriate praise and encouragement. The attention to detail is extended to all areas of the setting. For example, children's imagination is encouraged as the role play areas are changed frequently. These contain a creative and stimulating range of resources and have been transformed into settings such as a restaurant, garage, beach hut and woodland area. The appropriate interaction and support from staff means that children are able to fully utilise these areas and extend their imaginative thinking. For example, a group of children explore the 'winter' role play area, putting on winter clothes and sitting in the sledge. A staff member encourages them to talk about where they are going and they describe their imaginary journey to visit Father Christmas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage, enabling them to plan and provide activities that promote children's development in all areas. The planning of activities is clear and practical and staff are skilled in implementing the plans. This area is further enhanced because staff utilise a clear system for carrying forward any issues from their observations and assessments, ensuring that children's individual development is consistently promoted and is always considered within the activity plans. Children make balanced progress in all areas of learning because staff use comprehensive methods to assess them. They know the children well and are skilled in adapting the activities to suit individual needs. However, some activities are over-directed by adults and this means that

some opportunities are missed to further develop and encourage children's own ideas and creativity.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment as they participate in the wide range of activities and play opportunities. Their knowledge is extended and they are offered further challenges as they participate in a variety of topic work. This enables them to look more closely at subjects such as 'All About Me', 'Houses and Home', 'Recycling', 'Weather' and 'People Who Help Us'.

Children have good opportunities to develop the attitudes and behaviours that enable them to achieve in their learning. For example, the clear guidance and explanations from staff enables them to gain a good understanding of right and wrong and the relevance of sharing and respecting each other. They are motivated to learn through exciting and interesting activities such as growing plants, exploring with a metal detector and observing the wormery. Children interact well with others, negotiating plans and activities and taking turns in conversations. For example, a group of children discuss and organise a role play game in the 'Winter' role play area. They are beginning to communicate through writing and are offered lots of opportunities to practise this, such as making patterns in the sand tray, chalking, painting and making menus for the role play café. Children show a keen interest in books and enjoy both group and independent stories.

Children are beginning to see connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures and to use their mathematical knowledge in a meaningful context. For example, they measure and pour water and cooking ingredients, compare the sizes of objects and count items as part of their daily play. The thoughtful planning and attention to detail in the layout of the setting mean that children have opportunities to observe, explore and question through a wide range of activities that form the foundation of their later learning in history, geography, science and technology. They are competent in the use of the computer, confidently selecting and completing programmes. They are observant as they note changes, for example during cooking activities, when growing flowers and when watching caterpillars develop into butterflies.

Children's physical development is promoted and they enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their confidence and skills. For example, they dance in time to music, balance bean bags on their heads, use appropriate tools to chop food, pedal tricycles and jump on the mini trampoline. They enjoy numerous opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form through activities such as painting, junk modelling, creating collages and exploring the texture of materials such as sand, foam, pasta and wood shavings. They are gaining a good understanding of music and changing sounds as they participate in regular music sessions, listen to a variety of music and join in with songs and action rhymes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing a positive self-image and feel valued because they are respected as individuals. Their confidence and self-esteem are promoted because staff offer appropriate praise for both their efforts and achievements. Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities have their individual requirements recognised and consistently met. There is a comprehensive policy supporting this and staff ensure that this is consistently implemented. Staff are experienced and work sensitively with parents and with other professionals to ensure that children's care is consistent and appropriate. They have attended additional training to enable them to offer appropriate care for specific needs. Children have individual plans where realistic targets are set and these are reviewed on a regular basis, ensuring the balanced

promotion of their development. The good levels of support ensure that children are able to participate meaningfully in all activities and daily routines.

Children's understanding of their local community and the diversities of wider society is promoted as they are offered a wide variety of play opportunities and activities. They have regular access to a good range of play resources which give positive images and information about other cultures and ways of life. Their awareness is further increased and they gain a realistic understanding as they participate in themed work and ongoing topics. For example, they take 'Travelling Ted' on holiday with them and keep a record of this, using a world map to chart the various countries visited.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is good and they confidently choose their activities and organise turn-taking and sharing. They show care and concern for each other, for example children willingly include others in their games and activities, helping them to join in. They are gaining a good understanding about taking responsibility for their own actions because staff give them clear explanations, helping them to understand the implications of their behaviour and make informed decisions about this.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given clear information about the setting's procedures and policies, ensuring that they are aware of daily practice and expectations. The good use of newsletters and notice boards throughout the setting ensures that they are kept up-to-date with information about activity plans, topics and themes and are given clear explanations about these. This area is further supported by sessions where they are able to stay and play with their children. Parents are kept well-informed of their children's progress and activities through daily discussions with staff, meetings with key workers, regular parents' evenings and the use of daily diary sheets for younger children. Parents' views are actively sought and their feedback is taken positively.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. The good organisation of all areas of the setting means that their daily experiences are positive and they are consistently offered a balanced range of stimulating activities. An example of this is the good organisation of the main play rooms, which are changed frequently in order to accommodate children's varying needs and offer a wide variety of activities and play opportunities. Activities are well set out and there are designated areas for different types of play, ensuring that children are able to concentrate on their activities and move freely from one to another. The good organisation of paperwork and records means that they are stored confidentially but are easily accessible, enabling staff to check that children's needs are met.

Children's daily safety and welfare are promoted because there are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. There is also a comprehensive staff induction process and daily monitoring by the manager and senior staff to ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied. This is further supported by additional guidance regarding job descriptions and the deployment of students, ensuring that all are aware of roles and responsibilities and are able to provide consistent and appropriate care for all children.

Leadership and management is good. Children's learning, development and welfare are promoted by the thorough understanding that the manager and senior staff have of their roles and

responsibilities. The setting is well managed and continuously monitored to ensure that appropriate care is provided and staff are supported in their daily work. The manager and senior staff act as good role models to staff and children. They show a genuine enthusiasm for their work and have a positive attitude to feedback and advice. This is mirrored in their approach to training and to ensuring that all staff are supported to attend appropriate training whenever possible. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting, in which children can learn, develop and play confidently.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection, the setting was asked to ensure that the child protection procedures included contact details for appropriate agencies. The policy has now been reviewed to include all relevant details, further promoting children's safety and welfare.

At their last inspection of funded early education, the setting was asked to improve the use of the evaluation of activities. Staff awareness has now been raised and evaluation sheets are actively reviewed, with information being carried forward both daily and weekly to future planning. This therefore promotes children's individual development. They were also asked to provide opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills and to link sounds to letters. Staff have attended additional training, extra resources have been purchased and these areas are included in all daily play opportunities and activities, thus promoting children's learning and development.

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 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):

- further develop daily procedures to encourage children's independence and their understanding of the relevance of hygiene practices.

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 further opportunities which enable and encourage children to develop and express their own ideas and creativity.

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