

St Mary`s Church Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	203985
Inspection date	13 November 2007
Inspector	Lynn Clements
Setting Address	St Mary's Church, Church Street, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 2AE
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Registered person	The Trustees of St Mary's Church Nursery Great Dunmow
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 Church Nursery opened in 1997. It operates from St Mary's Church Hall, situated in Great Dunmow. The nursery serves the local and wider communities.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children at any one time. There are currently 27 children from three to under five years on roll. This includes 17 children in receipt of early education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a small number of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens four mornings a week during term times and offers two afternoons each week in the Spring and Summer terms for those children who will be starting main stream school in September. Sessions run from 09.15 until 11.45 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings and from 12.30 until 15.00 on Monday and Tuesday afternoons.

Six members of staff work with the children. The manager is a qualified infant teacher. Two members of staff hold appropriate qualifications. One member of staff is currently studying for a Diploma in Pre-school Practice. The setting receives support from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are beginning to learn about the importance of personal hygiene through the satisfactory routines in place. Posters have been designed and placed at child-height in the toilet areas. These provide children with visual clues which remind them how to wash their hands properly to prevent the spread of germs. All health related documentation is in place and updated as required enabling staff to meet children's changing needs. Staff have completed relevant first aid training. This enables them to care for children appropriately in the event of an accident. All accidents occurring on the premises are recorded and parents are kept fully informed. There are sound systems in place for the safe administration of medicines.

Staff ensure that relevant dietary information is sought from parents and carers prior to placement. This safeguards children against food or drink which could damage their health. Children do not have access to drinking water during the session. This impacts on their developing independence and some children may remain thirsty. Snack time is a sociable occasion for the children. They sit in large groups chatting to each other. However, whilst members of staff encourage children to pour their own drinks, they do not involve them in snack preparation and do not sit with them while they are having their snack. Therefore, opportunities for children to engage in discussion about healthy eating are limited, it also results in some children becoming bored and throwing food at each other.

Daily routines include physical development. Staff have a clear understanding about the importance of physical exercise. Children learn to move and control their bodies. For instance, they move around the setting negotiating space. They run and jump, balance and use wheeled toys with increasing competence. All children are able to rest or be active according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's creations are displayed on the walls providing a welcoming environment for children and their families. A range of activities are organised for the children prior to their arrival. Children are confident on arrival and happily leave their parents and carers to investigate the activities on offer. Members of staff carry out daily checks which are recorded and clear risk assessment are in place. These systems ensure that the play space remains safe for children to investigate independently. The play space is organised well. All toys, furniture and equipment are regularly checked so they remain in good condition for the children to use. There is a good range of child-height furniture which enables children to play in safety and comfort.

Children learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety whilst out and about, making trips to the local church and park. Children wear brightly coloured scarves so they can be easily identified and reflective jackets are used by members of staff to ensure road crossing is safe. Children and staff practise fire safety. This ensures that everyone knows what to do in an emergency. Children tidy toys to prevent tripping hazards and independently get the brush to sweep up spilt sand, this helps to prevent people slipping over. Safe arrival and collection procedures are in place. This ensures that children cannot leave the nursery unescorted. Staff only let children leave with authorised adults. Any visitors are checked on

arrival and a visitor record is maintained. Visitors to the setting are supervised to ensure children remain safe from harm.

Staff have a clear understanding about their responsibility to safeguard children from harm. They have a good understanding about the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect. Children's welfare is paramount.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and settled in the nursery. They move around freely, making decisions about the activities and resources they wish to explore. Staff support children and provide learning opportunities which help to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Children concentrate as they develop their role play ideas or share stories. They use creative materials, such as play dough, sand, creative media, crayons and paints, exploring their own ideas as they create three dimensional models, drawings and collages. Children have first hand experiences to develop their curiosity as learners, they join in cooking activities and explore a wide variety of man made and natural objects in their discovery box. Regular trips out and about to the local church, park and town provide valuable opportunities for children to learn about the world on their door step.

Staff listen to children, giving them time to share their thoughts and ideas. They help and encourage them through interaction, facial gestures and intonation which prompts children to extend their ideas and stories. Children ask questions and respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative. Staff use positive praise and encouragement to develop their interest and raise their self-esteem. Children try different activities and share their ideas without fear of failure.

Staff have implemented systems in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They plan and provide suitable activities which support the learning and development of children under three years.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children can make progress through play, in all six areas of learning. They work with other professionals, such as the local authority development officer and teachers from the local primary school. This enables them to develop and build on their existing good practice and provide high quality learning opportunities for children. Staff are very good at supporting children in their play and learning, particularly in small group work. They know when to stand back and give children time to develop their own ideas. All staff are interested in what the children say and do and use positive methods, including visual and audio clues to promote success.

Key worker observations of the children at play are used to monitor progress and update their records of assessment. Records provide staff and parents with a picture of what each child is able to do. This in turn enables them to identify each child's next step for learning. However, whilst key workers have identified children's next steps, this information is not used sufficiently in weekly planning to ensure that staff continue to build on what each child knows and can do. In addition, differentiation enabling staff to adapt activities to ensure all abilities are challenged effectively is limited.

Children demonstrate kindness and show care and consideration towards others. They greet each other warmly when they arrive, pass resources, make room during group time and learn to take turns and share fairly. Children enjoy show and tell and members of staff look through the treasure basket and give children clues to what is in the basket before showing them, this encourages children to think what may be in there and interact using language appropriately. They develop their thinking and listening skills during circle time discussions, sharing news from home or waiting to hear their name being called on the register. Children are confident communicators. They share their role play ideas with each other organising their pretend games effectively. Children use story and reference books, holding them appropriately and actively using the pictures as clues to the text. Staff capture the children's imagination and participation during large group story time, using intonation in their voices, facial expressions and engaging the children in what might happen next and repeated refrains.

Children develop their understanding of numbers. They count to 10 and beyond and are accurate at matching numbers to the correct symbols. Children explore repeating patterns during creative opportunities, such as Rangoli pattern pictures. They weigh, measure, sort and sequence ingredients, play dough and different objects. Children investigate simple addition and subtraction while joining in number rhymes and songs.

Staff provide opportunities for children to investigate change, as they observe the changing seasons of the year and check the daily weather. They enjoy walks in the local church yard and park, collecting leaves and conkers which they examine and play with back in the nursery. Children explore Information and Communication Technology, using robots and battery operated equipment, such as calculators, torches, tills and telephones. They learn about different cultures and customs talking about other countries during topics and joining in a variety of religious festivals. Children build and construct using click together train tracks and a wide variety of different building bricks. They also use their construction skills to create child-sized dens from large cardboard boxes and lengths of material.

Children use their imagination well. They enjoy making pretend meals while playing with the play dough, creating sausages and pizza. Children develop their role play games based on real and imagined experiences as they, take messages in their office or book appointments and see patients in their doctors surgery. Staff ensure that children have many opportunities to explore their creative ideas. They encourage them to join in creating a large three dimensional tiger from papier-mâché during their topic on India. Children create collages and wall displays which gives them a sense of achievement and also provides a bright and welcoming environment. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff work closely with parents and carers prior to placement to ensure that they have clear information about each child. This enables them to meet the children's individual needs. Staff work closely as a team and ensure there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender, race or disability. Children learn about the wider world, through topics, creative activities and getting out and about in their local community.

Staff have good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They talk with parents to ensure that any special services or equipment are in place before children start. For example, staff and children learn sign language to help a new child make a

smooth transition into the nursery. With parental consent, staff work with other agencies in the best interests of the child.

Staff encourage children to behave well. They act as good role models. Staff are consistent in their approach and work as a team to support positive behaviour. They use plenty of praise and encouragement and children respond well. Children greet each other warmly when they arrive. They take responsibility for their own behaviour. They learn to negotiate role play games and take turns. Children share resources and invite others to join them at circle time. Behaviour is good.

Staff develop strong relationships with parents and carers. Newsletters, notice boards and key worker discussions provide good opportunities for parents to discuss their needs and share relevant information about their child. This proactive approach enables staff to provide continuity of care as children move between their home and the nursery school.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of early education is good. Parents are encouraged to share in their child's record of assessment. Information supplied by parents and carers is added to the children's records by their key worker. This enables staff to develop a picture based on the whole child and enables them to target and support future progress more effectively.

Children learn to share and care with and for each other. They greet their friends and learn to support younger children. They explore other cultures and beliefs during topics. Children say prayers and learn to care for each other. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There are sound procedures in place for the employment of staff. All staff receive Criminal Record Bureau checks to ensure they are suitable to work with the children. Staff and child records are maintained. All documents are stored securely and confidentiality is respected. Ratios are met at all times. Registers are in place which show the times of arrival and departure. This ensures that children are properly accounted for and kept safe at all times. Policies and procedures are in place. However, these are not updated regularly to ensure the safe management of the setting. Staff induction and appraisal systems are in place to ensure staff work with and support children appropriately at all times. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management of early education is good. Regular staff meetings enable key workers to share information about each child. Staff work as a team to plan a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences for the children, which enable them to make progress towards the early learning goals. The manager is careful to monitor staff, she draws on their strengths when defining roles and responsibilities. This ensures that staff are effectively deployed and support children well. Relationships with the local feeder primary school are good and this helps to support smooth transitions for children and their families as they enter main stream school.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the provider has improved outcomes for children. Story sessions have been re-organised to ensure that correct staffing ratios are maintained. This provides children

with appropriate support. The child protection policy has been updated and now includes relevant contact names and numbers. This ensures that the correct authorities are notified and children remain protected from harm. However, since updating this policy, legislation has changed and the policy now requires further amendments. This has been taken forward at this inspection.

Since the last nursery education inspection the provider has addressed the following. Members of staff have increased opportunities for children to link sounds to letters and build skills for later learning. Parents are fully encouraged to share in their child's formative early education. They share observations of what their child knows and can do at home. They have regular opportunities to view and add comments to their child's assessment records. This ensures that key workers and parents work in partnership to support and promote the children's progress.

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):

- ensure children have access to fresh drinking water at all times; develop the current snack time system to encourage independence through choice and self service
- ensure records, policies and procedures which are required for efficient and safe management of the provision and welfare of children are maintained, this refers in particular to the safeguarding children procedure and complaints policy.

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):

- further develop the current planning systems to ensure it is based on children's next steps for learning; ensure differentiation is included in the weekly plans to enable staff to adapt activities and learning opportunities and ensure that all children are challenged effectively

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