

St Nicholas & St Faith Pre- School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	102974
Inspection date	05 February 2008
Inspector	Anne-Marie Moyse
Setting Address	St Nicholas & St Faith Church rooms, Alexandra Square, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 6AN
Telephone number	01752 846674 or 01752 518488
E-mail	
Registered person	St Nicholas & St Faith Pre- School
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 Nicholas and St Faith Pre-school opened in 1986 and operates from the main hall of the St Nicholas and St Faith church premises, situated in Saltash town centre. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open from 9.10 to 11.40 on Monday to Friday and 12.20 to 14.50 on Tuesdays during term time only.

There are currently 43 children, aged two to five years, on roll. Of these, 33 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school serves the local area. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and /or disabilities, and a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff, of these, three of the staff members have a relevant early years qualifications, and one is currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Local Authority Family Services.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from eating the carefully planned and presented food at snack time. The setting organise a cafeteria style snack time, which allows children to choose when and what to eat from the very healthy and nutritious foods on offer. A carefully planned menu ensures that children get a good balance of nutritious and interesting foods to try. For example, children can select to have a bowl of breakfast cereal, fresh fruits and vegetable chunks, cheese and French bread, or to try foods related to the theme of the week, such as prawn crackers. The children's independence is well supported during this activity as they find their name cards, wash their hands and serve their own snack, with minimal guidance and support from the staff. When the children have finished, they tidy away their own bowls, plates and cups ready for the next person, promoting their understanding of responsibility and social skills. Children's dietary needs are well known by the staff with a clear and simple system in place for ensuring that any specific dietary needs are respected.

Children are well cared for in the event of an injury or if they are unwell. All staff hold current first aid certificates, and have a good understanding of the procedures to follow to ensure documentation is comprehensively maintained. Staff check the first aid kits frequently, keeping them well stocked and ready for any emergency. All records to administer medication are obtained and shared with the parents keeping them well informed. The setting have a sick child policy in place, to minimise the spread of infection by excluding children when they are contagious, and providing suitable care if children become ill during the session.

Children are cared for in a clean and suitable environment. Staff ensure that the shared facilities are clean and fresh for the children, although some areas of the premises are showing signs of wear. The toilets are impeccably clean and well maintained. Children's hygiene is promoted through good routines, such as washing their hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap and warm water, and using paper towels to dry their hands limiting the spread of infection. After craft and painting, children use a communal bowl of water to remove the worst of the paint on their hands, but staff monitor this closely and change the water frequently. Children always wash their hands hygienically before eating and after toileting, minimising the risk of cross infection. Children are becoming independent in some aspects of their personal hygiene, such as using disposable tissues effectively to wipe their noses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are safe and secure in the shared premises. The setting have adopted strict routines for monitoring children's arrival and departure, keeping them safe while the main door is open. Once the session commences the door is locked and any visitors are admitted by staff, asked to sign the visitors book and supervised at all times. Staff check the premises are suitable for children when they set up the play room each day, with any concerns being reported to the hall committee. Some areas of the premises are worn and in a poor decorative order. The room has central heating with suitable systems in place to ensure that children do not have access to the heaters, however, the setting do not monitor the temperature of the room to ensure it meets minimal standards. Children are able to evacuate the building quickly and safely in the event of an accident because they practise fire drills regularly. The staff have a good working knowledge of what to do in an emergency or if a child was lost or not collected, although there

is limited information held in the policies and procedures to guide new staff, students or visitors to the setting.

Children have access to an adequate range of toys and resources at each session, which are safe and suitable. Staff check the toys and equipment when they set up and put away the resources each day. However, although resources are available which cover all areas of learning, some are not complete or encourage children to be independent. For example, some pieces of the number jigsaw were missing and the pencils were broken and blunt, preventing children from accomplishing some tasks.

Children's safety and welfare is safeguarded by the staff having a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities in child protection procedures. The staff are vigilant and ensure that they monitor all children's well-being in line with their policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are keen to attend the pre-school and are very happy. They arrive eagerly and are pleased to see their peers and the adults greeting each other enthusiastically. Children are forming some very good relationships and readily seek out their friends to play with. Children quickly settle and become engaged in the activities on offer. Children are familiar with the routine. They readily leave their play to settle for the register and to start the day with an energetic action song and dance, with the children enthusiastically singing and dancing to the lively music. There is a good balance of free play and adult directed activities on offer, which children freely choose what to do for the majority of the time. Children come together in a whole group for circle time, story time and physical play. These times are generally well organised and good pace although at times the youngest children find circle times difficult to sit still and listen without adult support. The staff are well qualified and interact well with the children, developing children's play and learning according to each child's different stages. Staff are generally well deployed and involved in helping children to enjoy and achieve, although at times some children are not effectively supported on the carpet area where their play can become boisterous and disruptive.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in all areas. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage, and provide a range of activities that promote learning in all areas of development. They support children enthusiastically giving them praise, encouragement and valuing their work and achievement. They record children's assessments and set realistic targets for each child, using key worker time to keep children on track. The planning covers all areas of learning and provides some interesting ideas and themes. However, the children's individual interests and learning styles are not always considered when planning the programme.

Children are bright, self-assured and very communicative. They are confident to engage adults and their peers in conversations, inquisitive enough to ask questions and seek answers. They enjoy talking about their home life in small groups and in front of the whole group at circle time. They relish the opportunity to stand with a member of staff and sing their favourite nursery rhyme or song, building their confidence and self-esteem as the whole group clap their achievements. Children use a variety of paper and note books to make marks during their play, to make lists, draw or colour in a picture, with staff encouraging children to label their own

work. They are encouraged to recognise their names on arrival and to book their place in the snack café. Children are beginning to recognise the letters in their names, although they tend not to use the phonetic sounds of the letters. A system using a limited number of coloured hats for certain activities helps children to gain an understanding of number, with two children allowed to use the computer at any time, and four to play with the sand tray. Children are encouraged to count during activities and in their play. They measure which is the tallest tower or the longest model. Children enjoy exploring the colour and feel of the paint as they use their hands or brushes to create paintings of dragons. Children's vocabulary is extended as the staff encourage children to talk about their painting, and what the paint is like. Children sit and concentrate for extended times as they are engaged and interested in the activity. There are some resources, which allow children to design and make their own ideas but these can be unexciting and limiting. Children enjoy using the digital camera to take pictures of others in the group, learning about battery power and how to transfer the pictures with the staff onto the computer. Staff support children's curiosity well, as they show children the inside of a camera, which uses a film, explaining simply how different cameras work.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by friendly and welcoming staff, who are dedicated to supporting all children's differing needs. The staff regularly exchange information with parents to ensure continuity of care, and that parental wishes are maintained. Parents feel confident and comfortable to approach the staff to discuss any concerns over their child's well-being. Staff discuss all aspects of the provision with parents at the initial interview and induction session. However, the policies and procedures for the setting contain some inaccuracies and are not readily available to parents. In addition to this, information about the managements committee is not easily available for parents, which inhibits parents ability to contact them if needed.

The partnership with parents and carers for nursery education is satisfactory. Parents have limited information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum, although staff do talk to parents at the initial interview it does not provide parents with detailed information for them to refer to at a later stage. The parents are able to see the daily planning, but information gathered from parents on children's interests is not used to influence the themes and topics followed at the setting. Parents receive a newsletter outlining the themes children are learning about and events held at the group. They are invited to meet with the staff, to discuss their children's progress at a yearly meeting, but they do not regularly contribute to planning the next step in their child's learning.

Children are given equal opportunities to access all activities, and they use resources that reflect positive images of a diverse society. They learn about other countries and customs through play activities such as painting hand print dragons, and tasting Chinese foods when celebrating Chinese New Year. Children are learning some words from other languages as they answer the register in French, Chinese, or English. Children who are learning English as an additional language are supported appropriately by the staff who research the child's first language by talking to parents and relatives so a basic vocabulary is understood. Children with learning difficulties and or disabilities are supported well as the staff closely observe children's progress. They are confident to seek additional professional help, in conjunction with the parents.

Children's behaviour is generally good. They understand the rules and routines of the group and co-operate well with each other when sharing resources or tidying them away. However, at times some children become noisy, unruly, and disrupt other children's play. These children

respond positively to the strategies used; staff distract children with other activities, or use simple clear instructions and signals for children to stop. Generally children are confident and friendly, developing good relationships with each other and the adults at the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The children are cared for by well qualified and enthusiastic staff, who develop good relationships with the children and parents. They transform the shared facility into a welcoming and child orientated environment, with children's work displayed attractively around the playroom. Children are able to access a range of toys and resources, which are suitable for the children attending. Although, occasionally some of the resources are mundane or incomplete.

The staff are dedicated and keen to further develop their knowledge and childcare skills by attending training and briefings. Staff are generally well deployed and interact very well with children. However, at times some small groups of children are not supported appropriately to ensure their behaviour does not become unruly. All staff are appropriately vetted and suitable to work with children. Committee members have also undergone some checks and are in the process of submitting relevant forms to Ofsted. All regulatory documents and records in place and accurately maintained. The setting have all the relevant policies and procedures, although some are incomplete and do not reflect the good practice followed in the setting. The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management is good. The management committee delegate most of the responsibilities for the nursery education to the capable staff team. The staff work well together to plan and implement a range of activities, which cover all areas of learning. The manager supervises the staff well, and endeavours to ensure that all children are making good progress in their learning, although there is no formal system for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the education provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the setting was asked to provide an additional toilet and hand washing facilities for the number of children registered to attend the group. The setting have been unable to install an additional toilet and facilities, but have made adequate arrangements to ensure that children are suitably cared for, which is acceptable to Ofsted.

The setting have taken steps to address the other recommendations raised. The setting are continuing to ensure that all new staff and committee members undergo suitable checks. All staff now hold a first aid certificate so children are well cared for in the event of an accident. All the regulatory policies and procedures are in place, although these do not always reflect the continuing changes in requirements. The setting maintain an accurate record of who is on the premises at any time helping to keep everyone safe in the event of an emergency. The setting have made progress in developing the activities to promote children's creativity. Art and craft activities are less adult directed and encourage children to explore materials more freely. The children enjoy acting out stories using puppets, or dancing and using their imagination with role play resources.

The setting have completely reviewed snack time, which now provides excellent range of healthy foods and promotes children's independence, learning and social skills. Snack time now provides

good opportunities for children to develop their communication language and literacy skills as they recognise their names and other labels in this area, they talk and listen to the staff and each other in small social groups. Children are also involved in counting and solving problems during this time, and learning about different foods from around the world. Snack time now contributes a valuable part of children's learning across all areas.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting were required to develop the programme for creative and mathematical development, to monitor and evaluate the routine and activities, and to use the assessment system more effectively to ensure that children are making progress in their learning and are challenged according to their individual ability.

The setting have made some improvements in the creative development programme, as the craft activities are less adult directed and allow children to explore and develop their own ideas. Children are encouraged to act out and dance to a variety of stories and music, and use their imagination, when using the role play resources. There are some basic materials so children can glue pieces of pre-cut shapes and paper together freely, or draw a picture using some pencils or crayons, but this is still restricted to a limited variety of materials. Children regularly count together and use counting skills in their play. They use mathematical skills in counting out plates and beakers for snack café and in calculating one more during their play. Children are attracted to the various number puzzles set out, although these are not always complete so limiting children's achievements.

The setting make regular assessments of children's progress and learning with key workers monitoring their own key group of children closely. The key workers are responsible for planning each child's next step, and making time during the sessions to work with the child to develop each specific aspect identified. All staff observe all children to contribute to building a comprehensive picture of children's progress in all areas of learning.

The setting have not completely addressed the recommendation to improve the monitoring and assessment of the activities and programme. The setting try to evaluate some aspects, but do not have any procedure in place so that staff or management are able to evaluate the whole programmes to identify their own areas for improvement. This continues to be a recommendation from this inspection.

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

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):

- make all policies, procedures and information about the organisation of the setting and the Foundation Stage Curriculum available to parents (also applies to Nursery Education)
- continue to update the policies and procedures in line with all changes in legislation and ensure that they reflect the practice of the setting

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 a system to monitor and assess the provision and the activities on offer, to ensure that all resources are stimulating, challenging, and that children are always well supported

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