

# St Hilary's Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127588
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Jennifer Scott
<b>Setting Address</b>	Senacre Community Hall, Titchfield Road, Senacre, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8FX
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustee's of St Hilary's Nursery School 127588
<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 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 Hilary's Nursery School opened in 1982 and operates from two rooms at the community centre situated in a large housing estate on the outskirts of Maidstone. Children have access to a secure enclosed outside play area.

A maximum of 35 children may attend the nursery school at any one time. The nursery School is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:30 and from 12:30 until 15:00 for 39 weeks of the year.

There are currently 50 children on roll aged from two years to five years. Of these, 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide area. The nursery school welcomes children with learning difficulties or disabilities. No children currently attend who have English as an additional language.

The nursery school employs eight staff, five staff, including the manager, have 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 good.

Children move confidently and in a variety of ways. They are competent when using the bikes and show good co-ordination when steering and pedalling. The organisation of vigorous physical play enables them to use balancing equipment and a climbing frame both inside and outside on a regular basis. Children enthusiastically perform action songs, singing and moving to tapes when they stamp and hop with clear enjoyment.

The children are protected from infection by the good practice of staff. The record keeping and documentation ensures parents are informed of accidents and illness so that children's health is protected. Children are also protected by the training staff have in first aid skills so that in the event of an accident staff can deal appropriately with injuries.

Children play in a spacious, clean and well maintained environment where there are secure routines to ensure toys, resources and equipment are clean and hygienic. Children participate in activities, topics and routines that enable them to learn the importance of good hygiene and healthy living. For example, staff encourage hand washing before and after eating and when children use the toilets. As a result children's skill in managing their personal hygiene is good.

Children benefit from a choice of healthy food and drink at snack times when they enjoy a good variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, soup which they make, and bread or crackers. They enjoy the social opportunities offered to them at snack times when they sit and eat in small groups at tables. Children can independently pour themselves drinks and can access water when they feel thirsty. This encourages children to develop healthy habits and promotes their independence. Staff ensure that all food and drink complies with parental instructions and children's preferences, enabling them to have confidence in the choices offered.

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

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and settle very well. They enjoy their play in a warm and welcoming environment with attractive displays of their work showing that staff value children's contributions. Children are unable to leave the premises without a suitable adult as security of the premises is very good.

Children benefit from playing in a spacious, organised environment. This allows them to move around and play safely. They have easy and safe access to a varied range of toys and resources appropriate for their age which are selected to ensure they interest and challenge children.

Regular risk assessments, indoors and outdoors, ensure children's safety. Children benefit from a range of procedures to protect them against fire because there are fire exits, extinguishers, clear signs and procedures in place. Staff are effectively deployed to ensure the safety of the children and are vigilant at all times; they supervise the children and ensure they are aware of how to move around safely, encouraging them to tidy away toys and use the toilets independently. The outdoor play area is secured with a lockable gate and high fencing so that children can safely access a variety of outdoor play equipment.

Staff have an understanding of child protection and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. A staff member has arranged to attend up to date training

for the designated person which supports all staff in safeguarding the welfare of children and implementing the written policy.

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

The provision is good.

The organisation of the day is good, providing a good balance of individual choices, small group and whole group activities. The routines provide appropriate quiet times, active play and physical opportunities for the children who clearly enjoy their play and learning experiences.

Children are confident in the setting and in their relationships with the staff. They play happily with each other and staff, learning to take turns and respond as they engage in role play, games, and books. Staff awareness and use of the Birth to three matters framework supports children's achievements and enables a smooth transition into the curriculum for those over three years.

Staff are very successful in encouraging children to share information and speak to adults or each other in small and large groups. This indicates that children are confident, enthusiastic and interested. Children's independence is promoted through routines, such as using the toilet independently, and at snack times, when they help themselves to drinks of water. The play opportunities are being developed by staff who have only recently taken over full responsibility for planning and delivering the programme and some activities like sand, water or storytime are not always included.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are encouraged to progress by the support from enthusiastic and interested staff. The written plans are formulated by the whole team, enabling them to be clear about what children need to learn from the activities. The programme covers all areas of learning and effectively build children's individual skills by providing interesting and appealing activities. However, the plans are being further developed by staff who have not been able to evaluate all areas of learning yet. This has resulted in a variety of new and exciting activities being offered at the expense of some more basic experiences.

All areas of learning are covered in the plans and children's progress is linked to the stepping stones. The staff use regular observations to plan the next steps for children's learning and ensure they receive good stimulation and are fully engaged in the activities that are delivered. For example, when staff support children using the computer, they ask good questions and prompt the correct responses skilfully so that children can benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the software.

Staff encourage and praise children so that they are confident to try tasks for themselves and continue to practise and develop their skills. Children are used to making independent choices, freely selecting equipment for themselves and participating in all types of play without fear of failure. Children enjoy stories and are learning to write their names on work which some can do skilfully. They share books with staff but do not readily select books to use during independent play, though staff are planning to reorganise the book area to encourage children's use of this.

Children practise their use of number and show a good understanding of size, colour and shape. For instance, they enjoy talking about the colours, shapes and sizes of the vegetables they cut up for soup. They confidently count how many children are present and discuss how much one

more or less is. Children are able to explore practical resources and learn about their environment through topics such as the seasons: they walk outside to collect fallen leaves and make a collage with these.

Children enjoy vigorous exercise inside and outside as well as frequent music, singing and movement sessions every day. They are making good progress in their physical development and confidently complete tasks requiring dexterity such as cutting vegetables with knives. Children develop their imagination effectively through role play; this is prompted well by staff who extend their communication skills by discussing ideas and roles with them. For instance, they pretend to care for babies using dolls, and explain their roles to each other and staff who enquire.

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

The provision is good.

Children's behaviour is very good, they assist in tidying up, share with each other and have positive relationships with adults and other children. They understand the rules within the setting and are learning to respect each other and different lifestyles. This ensures good relationships and harmony. Staff are skilled at developing strong relationships through the use of praise and humour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's individual needs and background are respected by the staff who use their knowledge of each child to guide their care. Children have access to resources that reflect positive images of people in the community. They are learning to respect each other and different lifestyles through the celebration of various festivals. Staff are developing practice and increasing children's experience of diversity which develops their self esteem.

The staff have some experience of caring for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and demonstrate a sensitive approach to meeting those needs. Any concerns are discussed privately and referrals are sought from appropriate agencies only with consent. Children are carefully assessed and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are constructed with support from the relevant professionals. These are clear and note the next steps in learning to promote the welfare and development of the child in partnership with parents and other agencies.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents receive good information on the activities provided and in newsletters so that they can support activities and further children's learning at home. Children particularly enjoy the show and tell routine when they talk about items they have brought into the nursery. Parents receive information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and liaison between staff and parents about the individual needs of children is frequent. This ensures staff and parents are aware of children's achievements and any concerns. Staff welcome all parents into the nursery and share any relevant information which enables parents to support their children's development and thus build their confidence. Information is shared regularly and when completing records of transfer to school. However, if parents do not acknowledge the regular written reports, staff do not continue to provide a regular written account of their children's progress, although they discuss this with all parents.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The management committee and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and provide good support for the children and users of the nursery. Children are protected by procedures

for vetting and employing appropriately qualified staff. Induction training, policies and procedures all meet requirements and are effective in keeping children healthy and safeguarding their welfare. However, some are very brief and have not been updated. For example, the lost child procedure does not provide full guidance to staff or parents.

Leadership and Management is good. A range of training is accessed to promote the professional development of staff, both 'in house' and through attending courses. For example, some staff have attended training on the Birth to three framework and others have attended the workshops on autism which they share with other staff. Staff have specific responsibilities and are keen to contribute to the planning of the programme and routines. As a result, outcomes to promote children's welfare, care and learning are good.

Staff record children's development frequently and use this to underpin their planning of activities, which results in discussions of, and a focus on individual needs. There are records and plans which staff use to provide good plans to enable for children to progress and build their skills. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the nursery received two recommendations to improve the care. Children now benefit from the progress made in addressing these. There is a detailed operational plan containing relevant policies and procedures and the behaviour management policy and practice is very clear and positive.

At the previous nursery education inspection there were two issues identified to improve practice. Staff have developed their plans and are evaluating successfully so that they have clear learning intentions adapted for individual children and are able to use evaluations to formulate a development plan.

### **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 can be seen 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 that children experience a full range of play experiences, such as sand, dough and storytime
- review policies and procedures to ensure these are sufficiently informative.

### **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):

- ensure that plans enable children to experience the full range of learning across all aspects of the six curriculum areas
- ensure that all parents experience the same opportunities for feedback on the progress of their children (also applies to care)

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)