

St. Michaels /St. Matthews Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240976
Inspection date	27 February 2008
Inspector	Jennifer Devine
Setting Address	St Matthews Church, St Marys Road, London, NW10 4AU
Telephone number	020 8961 6399
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Registered person	St. Michael'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 satisfactory. 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 Michaels/St Matthews Nursery opened in 2003. It is one of three nurseries run by a private provider and operates from a church hall at St Matthews Church, in Harlesden, in the London borough of Brent. A maximum of 46 children may attend at any one time. The nursery is open each week day from 08:00 to 18:00, all year round; except for bank holidays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children, aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these 22 children receive funding for nursery education.

The nursery employs fifteen staff, of which over half the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health and well being is well promoted within the setting, they are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. There are thorough health and hygiene procedures in place which staff follow to ensure children's welfare, such as wearing protective disposable aprons and gloves when changing nappies. Children understand the importance of good hand washing before mealtimes and manage this independently. The baby room is a designated 'no shoe' area and this ensures that babies can crawl around on the floor with no risk to their health. Suitable recording procedures are in place for accidents and medication administration. There are three staff members who are first aid trained and this ensures children's welfare in the event of an emergency situation.

Children benefit from a healthy diet, they enjoy well presented and nutritious meals which are freshly prepared each day by the cook. Children's individual dietary needs are well known by staff. Parents provide all foods for the younger babies which staff store appropriately and reheat as required. Drinking water is readily available throughout the day. Children enjoy sociable meal times where they eat comfortably around the table with their friends and staff present.

Children enjoy a selection of activities which contributes to their good physical health. The garden is accessible where they can run, climb and release energy together with getting fresh air. There is a range of garden toys such as tricycles and cars which children enjoy riding around on. They also have indoor physical activities such as daily exercise movement sessions to keep them keep active and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised environment that is comfortably furnished and well equipped, enabling children to make good use of space and resources. The setting is suitably clean, maintained and decorated with children's artwork and displays. Babies have appropriate sized furniture such as high chairs and sleep in child sized sleeping bags which are individually labelled for each child. A travel cot is available for the youngest babies. The setting has a wide range of good quality toys and play equipment which are mainly stored in low level cupboards and are easily accessible for the children, enabling them to make free choices about their play.

Strong emphasis is placed on children's safety and security. Daily safety checks are completed to ensure the premises, toys and equipment are suitable and in good condition. Good security precautions are in place such as ensuring the front entrance is kept locked and all visitors sign in the visitors book on arrival. Regular fire drills are conducted and this ensures children gain an understanding of evacuating the building safely. An evacuation cot is used for the younger babies to enable staff to safely leave the building.

Children are protected from possible abuse as staff have a good understanding and knowledge of child protection issues. They are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and know the reporting procedures to follow if concerned for a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are making good progress in their development. Children arrive at the nursery and are happy to see their friends and familiar adults. They settle quickly and eagerly take part in a range of interesting activities where they acquire new skills and knowledge.

Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to guide their planning for the babies. They have a good understanding of providing an environment to encourage children's early developmental skills. Babies are confident to explore their surroundings, choosing toys to experiment with and returning to the staff for cuddles and reassurance. Babies thoroughly enjoy joining in with favourite songs such as row, row, row your boat, where they sit together and hold hands and squeal in excitement at the end of the song. Babies feel secure and grow in confidence because of the continual interest and warmth shown to them by caring staff. Children between the ages of fifteen to eighteen months join the older children in the larger group room. The younger children have a designated play area within the room with activities planned for their individual learning needs. They also have the opportunity during the day of joining the older children in free play and enjoy playing alongside their friends. All children thoroughly enjoy joining in with the early morning singing session where the group sing their own good morning songs. Staff are highly skilled in ensuring this time makes all children feel proud and included in nursery life.

Story times are not organised effectively as the groups of children are too large. This impacts on children not being able to concentrate and then easily losing interest.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and develop. They plan an interesting curriculum which motivates children to learn. Children have time during the day for free choice play and times are planned for focussed activities where staff work directly with the children encouraging their learning further. A range of children's work is placed in their individual files to show their achievements. Staff complete some observations on the children's development and record progress but this is inconsistently maintained. There is no system in place for recording the next steps of learning for children and this impacts on not all children's learning needs being fully met at all times.

Children's attitudes to learning is positive. They are fully involved and motivated throughout the day at nursery. They are able to select their chosen play and spend long periods of time concentrating on a task. Children's social skills are good. They have developed caring relationships with each other and adults and help to take care of the younger children. They understand about sharing, taking turns and play happily together. Children's independence skills are encouraged in nursery but this is not extended during lunch times to enable them to serve their own lunch and make decisions on how much they wish to eat. Children are confident speakers and engage in conversations during their play and with adults who provide good support in extending their vocabulary and thinking. Children can recognise and write their own names. They learn letter sounds during group times and identify letters in their own names and their friends. Children have lots of opportunities for developing their understanding of numbers and problem solving skills as they can access a wide range of practical activities. For example, children enjoyed making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, where they learnt about quantities whilst measuring and weighing ingredients.

Staff provide an environment which encourages children to explore and investigate and learn about the world they live in. Children look closely at the features of a worm found outside in the garden and then recall their knowledge by drawing their own pictures and writing their own captions. Children enjoy using the computer where they are learning about mouse control and following simple programmes. Children have free access to art and craft resources, which is enjoyed and well used. They develop their dexterity and coordination as they carefully cut out pictures in magazines. They have free access to musical instruments and also have organised times to develop their understanding of sound and music. During singing sessions children thoroughly enjoy using the instruments and are beginning to understand about rhythm as play in time with the music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are generally aware of individual children's needs which promotes children's happiness and security within the setting. Children's confidence grows through having the opportunity to make choices about their play and through the respect and care shown by staff. There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, appropriate strategies are in place, such as having an identified special needs coordinator within the staff team. Children are provided with a range of meaningful resources that reflect positive images of the wider world. They participate in many festivals and celebrations throughout the year and this increases their awareness of diversity and other peoples lives. Children's behaviour is good and appropriate for ages. They have a good understanding of the boundaries and expectations of the nursery. They play well together, sharing and taking turns; and are learning to be respectful to each other. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. There are effective systems in place to keep parents well informed about their child's day. Staff are welcoming and friendly and make themselves available to discuss any issues with parents. Babies routines are fully discussed with parents to enable the same routines to be followed at nursery. Babies have daily record sheets completed which are shared with parents to ensure they are aware of their child's food intake for the day. Formal parents meetings are held during the year and this enables parents to further discuss their child's progress and share written records of achievements. Parents are also invited in for various events such as attending sports day in the summer months.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There is robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place for employing new staff and evidence is kept of checks carried out on them. However the registered provider has failed to notify Ofsted of the change of the manager; this prevents Ofsted from carrying out the required suitability checks and is a breach of regulation. Over half the staff working with the children hold appropriate qualifications and a number of staff are currently working towards their National Vocational Qualification level three. Staff ratios are not always maintained everyday and this impacts on children's welfare and safety being compromised. All the required documentation and records are in place to ensure the smooth running of the nursery.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good. Staff work well as a team, are motivated and enthusiastic to provide an exciting and stimulating environment. The registered

provider is committed to further development and supports staff to attend further training or provides in house training, such as Child protection.

Staff meetings are held regularly where the manager reviews practises and identified areas for improvements such as developing the outdoor area.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the nursery has made improvements in the care and education it offers to children. Regular risk assessments on the premises are conducted and this ensures children's safety is maintained. A written record of medication administered is maintained and this protects children's welfare. The nursery was required to ensure all adults working with the children complete the required forms for Ofsted. Since 2005 the nursery is only required to notify Ofsted of the change of manager and this is ongoing.

The children benefit from being provided with more resources for mathematical development and have regular access to the computer. The outdoor play area is currently under going landscaping but overall, children have more opportunities for physical play which benefits their good health.

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.

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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):

- improve the organisation of story times to ensure the grouping of children is of a manageable size.
- ensure the ratios of staff to children are met at all times
- ensure Ofsted are notified of the change of manager

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):

- develop the systems for observing and recording children's development which includes children's next steps for learning
- develop opportunities for children's independence in serving their own foods at meal times.

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