

St. Thomas' Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY268854
Inspection date	17 March 2008
Inspector	Josephine Geoghegan
Setting Address	Gassiot House, Lambeth Palace Road, London, SE1 7EH
Telephone number	020 7188 6499
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Registered person	Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
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 Thomas' Day Nursery opened in 1989 and is run by the Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital NHS Trust. The nursery moved to the present premises, a purpose-built building on the hospital site, in 2003. It operates from three rooms, the largest of which is divided into three separate areas. The nursery provides full day care for children whose parents work for the Trust. It opens five days a week, all year round except bank holidays, from 07:00 to 19:00.

The nursery is registered to provide care for a maximum of 103 children under five years at any one time. There are currently 78 children on roll, 24 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The nursery presently supports a few children who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities and eight children who speak English as an additional language.

23 staff work directly with the children, 21 of whom hold early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. One staff member holds a foundation degree. The setting also employs a kitchen assistant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment. Staff maintain good hygiene practices, for example, they ensure tables, changing mats and toys are clean, and use disposable gloves and aprons, helping to prevent the spread of infection. In addition, outside shoe covers and hand gel are available for use before entering the baby room. Children learn good hygiene habits through everyday routines, such as washing their hands before meals. They are supported in the event of an accident or illness, as staff hold first aid qualifications and appropriate records are kept.

Children use the large outside play area on a daily basis, enabling them to benefit from regular fresh air and exercise. They develop their physical skills using a range of climbing equipment and wheeled toys. Children benefit from balanced and nutritious meals which are freshly prepared on the hospital premises. Children enjoy a variety of healthy snacks, for example, apples, raisins and oranges, and have constant access to fresh water. Older children help themselves to additional healthy snacks throughout the day, such as cucumber and raisins. Children are able to make choices about the food they eat at mealtimes. They develop their social skills as they sit together in small groups with staff, holding conversations. Secure systems are in place to ensure children's individual dietary needs are known and respected, for example, displays in the milk kitchen show children's individual dietary requirements and routines.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is promoted well within the setting through the use of heater guards, electric socket covers and appropriate fire safety equipment. Children practise the emergency evacuation procedures regularly. Positive steps are taken to minimise risks, for example, doors have low level windows, enabling staff to see if children are near the door before they open it. Good systems are in place to promote security and staff implement a range of safety procedures, such as risk assessments. In addition, staff ensure babies who are sleeping in the adjoining sleep room are regularly monitored, promoting safety.

Children benefit from play space that is well organised to meet their needs effectively. Children over three are cared for in two adjoining rooms, while children under three are cared for in one room that is divided into three sections. All group rooms are well stocked with a wide range of toys, books and equipment that are suitable for the age and stage of development of the children in the room. Toys and equipment are of good quality. Children are able to make choices as resources are stored at low level. However, books are not well maintained, limiting opportunities for children to read for enjoyment. Children's physical care needs are met. They are provided with child-sized tables, chairs, sofas and cushions in the book and home areas. Younger children are provided with cots, high and low chairs with harnesses. Half moon cushions support babies while sitting.

Children's welfare is promoted as staff know what to do if they are worried a child is being abused. Appropriate procedures are in place and staff attend child protection training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Babies are supported well by staff as they explore a range of toys that enable them to make connections, such as rattles and electronic and musical cause and effect toys. They move freely, making choices of toys as they reach, crawl or roll over. This develops their independence and physical skills. Children over one are encouraged to develop their walking skills, for example, staff count children's steps as they use push along toys and clap and give them praise for their efforts. Children under two also enjoy exploring, for example, while looking for animals in sand and shredded paper; they develop their language skills as staff name the animals that they find. All younger children have opportunities to be creative and explore while using a range of materials and media, such as plastercine, paint and collage materials. In all group rooms children enjoy stories and looking at books with staff. They become skilful communicators as they listen and respond appropriately. Children aged between two and three years show increasing independence, for example, they make choices at mealtimes and move freely between activities, selecting resources. They develop their physical control as they use small climbing frames with slides, the trampoline and the seesaw. In addition, they enjoy action songs. They imitate animals as they sing the jungle song and clap with enthusiasm.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's personal, social and emotional development is supported well, for example, they make choices and move freely between activities. They develop their personal care skills as they change into their boots before outside play, use the bathroom independently and make choices during mealtimes. Children are very well behaved and respond positively when staff remind them of expectations of their behaviour, showing their understanding of right and wrong. They follow well established routines, such as lining up to go outside. Children have opportunities to develop their physical skills while using a range of wheeled toys and climbing equipment. They balance and climb on the caterpillar frame with confidence. They develop their physical control as they throw balls at the target and run around with speed, showing good spatial awareness. Children use hand-held tools effectively, for example, they are able to use scissors appropriately and use a range of cutters, spoons and scoops with plastercine and sand. Children have opportunities to learn about nature and living things through planned activities that relate to themes, such as 'the sea', and through hands on experiences, such as caring for the hamster and growing plants. They develop their sense of place through outings in the local environment. They talk about past events at home, showing their developing sense of time. Children participate in activities that relate to a wide variety of festivals, for example, Chinese New Year, Holi and St. Patrick's Day, developing their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Children are developing good maths skills, for example, they show an understanding of number as they count accurately during everyday activities, with some children able to count in excess of twenty. They enjoy maths games, for example, throwing the dice and finding the corresponding number on the card or recognising numerals on the target during the ball game. They learn about shape, space and measure while using the tea set with dry sand and malleable materials with shape cutters. Children have good opportunities to develop their creative skills while using a wide range of resources, such as paint, collage and drawing materials. However, in all group rooms, displays of children's artwork fail to reflect their own creativity. For example, paintings on pre-cut shapes of animals and sea life provide limited encouragement for children to develop their free creative expression. Children play cooperatively and become absorbed in imaginative play, for example, while using the hairdressers set, dressing up and using the home

corner. They participate in regular music and movement sessions with a peripatetic teacher, enabling them to explore sound. Children are developing good communication skills, for example, they speak confidently in a small group and use language to express their feelings. They listen and actively respond to stories during group time, developing their reading skills as they show an understanding of the elements of the story. Children are developing good writing skills; some children able to write their names and label their drawings.

Children are offered a broad range of activities that promote all areas of learning. Staff show regard to the Birth to three matters framework and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage in their planning, assessments and displays. They use effective systems to track children's progress, such as observations, photographs and samples of children's work. They provide parents with regular written reports. Staff use their assessments and evaluation of daily activities to plan activities that relate to children's interests and developmental needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn about cultures and beliefs through well planned activities that relate to a variety of festivals. They use a range of resources that reflect people in the community, including reference books relating to a variety of religions. Good systems are in place to ensure children's individual needs are known. Children who have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well as staff work closely with parents and any relevant agencies. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported by staff within the daily routine.

Children show a keen sense of belonging. They form good relationships with one another and staff, for example, they freely hold conversations, making their needs known. Younger children enjoy lots of cuddles, helping them to feel secure. In addition, children say goodbye to each other when collected by their parents. Children are well behaved. They share and take turns during play and respond well to the daily routines.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are offered a wide range of information about the setting and are kept well informed about their children's progress and events of the day. All parents have opportunities to review their child's progress through regular meetings with staff and written reports. Staff use daily diaries that record information such as food intake and details of sleep times for younger children to ensure information is shared. Parents have access to all policies and procedures, ensuring they are kept informed about the management of the service.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Robust systems ensure staff are suitable to work with children, for example, appropriate recruitment and vetting systems are in place and staff participate in a regular system of appraisal. Staff show a commitment to the development of the service, for example, they have opportunities to attend relevant courses, extending their knowledge of childcare. They attend regular staff meetings to plan and evaluate the care and education offered. All the required documentation, such as records of attendance, children's individual details, and any accidents or medication administered, is in place, which helps to safeguard children's welfare. In addition, a wide range of policies and procedures support the

management of the service. Staff are well deployed and work cooperatively, ensuring children are supervised appropriately.

Children are able to play in a well organised setting where they can move freely as safety is promoted well. Children are able to select resources and develop their independence as toys and equipment are stored at low level. However, not all books are well maintained and there is limited encouragement for children to develop their free creative expression. Good use is made of the time children spend at the setting, enabling them to participate in a broad range of activities that promote learning, including free play and group activities, outdoor play and outings in the local community. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to provide a visitors' book and develop staff's knowledge of working with children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting has met these recommendations. In addition, the setting was asked to improve nursery education by extending the challenges set for children relating to outside play, creative development and maths. The setting met these recommendations by planning outside play and providing a wider range of resources. The setting has also developed systems to ensure maths is promoted through everyday practical activities, and reorganised resources to give children better access to creative materials.

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.

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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):

- ensure books are well maintained (also applies to education).

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):

- extend opportunities for children to develop their free creative expression (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