

St Nicholas Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY371259
Inspection date	24/03/2009
Inspector	Glenda Kathleen Field
Setting address	St. Nicholas Church, Morton Road, LOWESTOFT, Suffolk, NR33 0JQ
Telephone number	01502 582643
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

St. Nicholas Pre-school is privately owned and was registered in 2008. The provision is situated in Lowestoft, Suffolk and operates from the large hall of the St. Nicholas Church. There is level access to the provision. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 20 children aged two to under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. Sessions operate each weekday during term time only from 09.00 to 12.00 with a lunch club from 12.00 to 12.55. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

There are currently 27 children within the early years age group on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting is in receipt of funding for nursery education. Four staff are employed including the provider, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting offers places to students from local colleges working towards childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Well-developed knowledge of each child's background and individual needs ensures that staff are able to successfully promote children's care and welfare. Effective systems are in place for planning and observation, and assessments are ongoing to monitor children's progress. Good working relationships have been established with parents and others involved in the children's care. Areas for future development have been identified, for example, the installation of an impact absorbing safety surface and new fencing in the outdoor area. The setting shows strong capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that adult-focussed activities identify challenge for more able children
- develop the use of reflective practice, seeking the views of all staff and parents, to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for improvement that will improve the quality of the provision for all children.
- review the organisation of whole group activities, to ensure every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are warm, caring and enthusiastic. They work together well and their effective deployment ensures that adult-child ratios are consistently being

maintained. Children's welfare is supported through the established key person system. The organisation of the premises and the accessibility of resources effectively support children's learning and development. There is a clear awareness of safety amongst the staff. A written risk assessment of the premises and outings made is in place and written safety checklists of the premises are completed daily. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and the procedure to be followed if concerned. A designated practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the setting has been nominated. Self-evaluation to help monitor the service has recently commenced and some areas for development have been identified. However, there is not a strong enough focus on seeking the views of others, for example, all staff and parents. This means that priorities for improvement may not be as accurately targeted as they could be.

Good links with parents are forged which enable staff to meet children's individual needs and provide consistency of care. Information is sought from parents, prior to children starting at the setting, regarding children's starting points. Daily diaries are completed for parents who also receive detailed information on their children's progress. For example, regular meetings are organised between parents and their children's key person when they can add to their children's achievement records. Furthermore, newsletters and an informative notice board ensures information is regularly updated. Parents speak very highly of the setting, complementing staff on their promotion of healthy eating for children, the positive strategies used to manage behaviour and the fact that parents are kept informed of all matters concerning their children. The group has begun to implement a system of sharing information with other settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage to promote progression and continuity of care.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are welcomed by caring staff. They are confident and happy in the setting. A well-organised environment enables them to follow their interests, develop independence, initiate and extend their own play. Displays of children's work and praise from staff encourages their self-esteem. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to plan around the interests of the children. For example, a child who shows a strong interest in trains was encouraged by staff to draw a train at the craft table, this they did with admirable results. Staff ensure that children are provided with an appropriate range of interesting and enjoyable activities around the six areas of learning and interact and effectively question children to support their learning. A system is in place to make observations of children which are used to assess their progress and plan for the next steps in their learning. However, adult-focussed activities do not identify challenge for more able children to enable clear learning priorities to be incorporated into session plans.

Most children enjoy whole group time; they talk about the weather, complete the daily calendar and listen to books read by staff, however, they are not always a motivating and enjoyable learning experience for all children as some become over excited and distracted, thus preventing others from contributing to the activity.

Children are encouraged to help during tidying up and many are able to put on their own coats and shoes. Their independence is further encouraged by staff enabling them to pour their own drinks at snack time. Children handle books well showing an understanding that print carries meaning. They develop their language for thinking, for example, they explore cornflakes, corn flour and cotton wool and give their thoughts on what the items feel like. The balanced range of resources provide good opportunities for the children to use numbers, to count, sequence and match. Children have good opportunities to promote their creative development. Many opportunities are provided for children to mark-make, for example, children write the first letter of their name in dry oats and they thoroughly enjoy activities such as playdough, sand play, free painting and chalking which are readily available during each session. They have use of the role play areas, dressing up clothes and small world resources, which promotes their imagination. They are involved in singing of songs and rhymes and use musical instruments.

The interesting displays, activities and resources in place provide a good basis for children to understand the wider world. A wide selection of books, puzzles, play food and small world characters reflect our multi-cultural society. Children learn about cultures and beliefs through activities based around celebrations, for example, Chinese New Year, St. George's Day and St Patrick's Day. Visitors are invited to talk to the children such as, the nurse and doctor, police, priest and a representative from Pets World. Visits are made to the lifeguard station, beach and Kensington Gardens. Children have access to natural materials, computers, programmable toys, calculators and telephones.

Children benefit from the use of the outdoor play area where they use large equipment to promote their physical skills. They gain good, spatial awareness as they run around, play football and use ride-on toys. Children show confidence when using the climbing frame, slide and mini-stilts. Large group games take place such as parachute games. They handle tools with control when manipulating dough and confidently use scissors as they cut out pictures. Children behave well and staff manage behaviour sensitively and positively. All staff support children with specific needs well and a designated staff member devises individual educational programmes with support from the local authority and other outside agencies.

Children learn how to manage their own health and hygiene. They are beginning to independently manage their personal care in the cloakroom, and activities and discussion support their understanding of good habits. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged through exercise and nourishing snacks. Children are learning about keeping themselves safe, for example, not running indoors and road safety being reinforced by staff on outings. All the required written parental consents are obtained.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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.