



St Bart's House

Inspection report for early years provision

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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

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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Bart's House is one of four settings run by St Bart's Partnership. It is an established nursery that first opened in 2000; it was re-registered when the original owner formed a new partnership in 2005. It operates from four rooms in a large detached house in Sandwich.

A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time. St Bart's House is open each weekday from 07:30 to 18:30 for 50 weeks of the year. Children attend a variety of

sessions each week. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children aged from babies to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children mostly come from the local area. The nursery is not currently supporting any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but has done so in the past. They support a number of children who speak two languages at home.

The nursery employs 10 members of staff who work directly with the children; of these, eight hold appropriate early years qualifications, two are working towards a qualification and two are working towards a higher qualification.

The nursery receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and toddlers relate well to their carers, the same staff are with them each day providing consistency and security. The youngest children look to the staff to help them. They express their feelings easily, making it clear when they are happy, sad, uncomfortable or tired. They have a healthy sense of dependence because they receive attention when it is required. This gradually leads them to become appropriately independent. Babies do not all sleep in cots. Staff use rockers, sleep mats and large cushions to lay children down to sleep. The degree of comfort is variable and staff are not reviewing whether the sleeping arrangements are still appropriate as babies grow.

Staff generally take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection. They use gloves and aprons when changing nappies, antibacterial spray to clean tables and encourage children to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. However, staff do not always wash their hands before preparing snacks and use their hands to push food onto the children's plates, which is not hygienic. Some resources in the baby room are grubby and unappealing.

Almost all staff hold a first aid qualification; they are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. The staff record any accidents and any first aid that is administered whilst the children are in their care; this ensures parents are well informed about what has happened to their child. They always obtain written permission to administer medication but there is some inconsistency as to how this is recorded.

There is a sick child policy; it is made clear to parents the exclusion period for usual childhood illnesses, protecting other children's health. If children become poorly whilst attending the pre-school, they are isolated as much as possible, cared for and made comfortable until their parents collect them.

Food is provided by the nursery; the menu is planned over a four-week period to ensure variety. Parents always know what their child has eaten. Because the cook takes sole responsibility for the children's meals, and domestic staff clean the nursery, staff have more time with the children and are not called away to do other tasks. The meals are freshly prepared on the premises by a cook who is well informed about any food allergies, or preferences children have, ensuring they are given an appropriate diet agreed with parents. Fresh fruit is available every day and children know this is a healthy food. Staff are good role models to children at meal times; they sit with them and eat the same meals. Children and staff chat at meal times, and this encourages children's social skills. Babies are fed by staff and are given sufficient time to experiment with using a spoon and feeding themselves. The babies are occasionally served with some meals that are covered with instant gravy, which is not wholly appropriate nor is encouraging them to develop a discerning sense of taste. Water is available at all times and children know how to help themselves, ensuring they remain hydrated.

Children's physical development is fostered by regular outdoor play in an attractive garden that has a range of equipment providing different challenges. The children use the outdoor equipment imaginatively, for example, they tied green plastic to the climbing frame to turn it into a jungle where they pretend to be different animals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The owners carry out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and outdoor play areas; a checklist is used each day to ensure these standards are maintained keeping children safe. All electrical goods and fire safety equipment are tested regularly to ensure they remain safe to use.

The nursery is secure. Children are protected because staff open the door to parents and visitors, ensuring only suitable people are admitted. The electronic gates to the front garden are closed securely before children use this area to prevent children leaving the premises, or cars entering whilst they play.

Children make independent choices from a selection of toys, which support their development in a range of skills. Art and craft materials however, are not so easily accessed because they are kept in a cupboard. A large plastic sheet is placed on the table before children use powder paints, this is difficult for them to manage independently. Staff will get these out if children ask. Many of the resources are plastic manufactured toys and the availability to a range of resources that reflect the natural world and the environment in which the children live is limited. The equipment is not always presented in an attractive way to encourage children to use it, for example, in the role play area lots of equipment is just mixed in large boxes. The equipment has not been sorted to enable children to access what they want easily. The dressing up clothes are not displayed so that children can see everything that is available, pens in the mark making area are dry and pencil crayons are not sharpened to make them easy to use. There are a sufficient number of child-sized chairs and tables to allow children to manage tasks more easily and eat in groups.

Children are learning how to keep themselves safe through planned activities; for example, they understand how to protect their skin in the sun, and the importance of wearing hats when it is hot. Staff work in co-operation with parents and discuss car safety after a request from a parent to consolidate what children are learning at home; in particular the importance of wearing seat belts. A Perspex barrier on the upstairs windows allows the windows to be opened safely, providing fresh air when it is warm, making it more comfortable for children. Children occasionally play with the window latches suggesting they are not clear that this is not allowed. Children use the stairs with one adult in front and one behind to help them descend and ascend safely. They have to reach up to the rail on one side, and use their hands on the wall to steady themselves because there is not a banister rail at child height to hold. Children are encouraged to go down seated if they do not feel secure which increases their confidence until they feel able to walk.

Staff are familiar with the fire evacuation procedures to effect a speedy evacuation in the event of an emergency. Procedures are in place for staff in the baby room to be helped to carry the babies downstairs. Fire drills are carried out regularly on different days to ensure all children understand the procedure.

There are clear child protection procedures for staff to follow if they have concerns about any child to ensure the welfare of children. Minor existing injuries are always discussed with parents but are not always recorded; therefore, staff do not have an accurate record to refer to in the future. The manager agreed that records would be kept in the future of all existing injuries no matter how minor.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff who work with the youngest children are very kind and nurture them appropriately developing their self-esteem. They praise and encourage them and when children look for reassurance, they are rewarded with smiles, a cuddle or soothing words. Staff have attended Birth to three matters framework training and use this to plan and provide activities. Staff are still collecting natural resources for treasure baskets and heuristic play and have been persuaded not to start using this equipment until they have a good range. Staff in the one to two-year-olds' identify children's current schema and try to provide appropriate activities to challenge children's thinking and extend their learning. Humour is used to good effect when staff read stories and sing with them; the children giggle excitedly. Children enjoy plenty of outdoor play where they explore sand, water and shaving foam using their senses. They love to stroke the pet guinea pig and see what he has to eat, learning how to take care of animals.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff provide some interesting activities, for instance, making their own paper introducing children to recycling. They deliver activities with enthusiasm.

Their understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is

satisfactory. They relate an activity each day to one of the six learning areas. Much of the day is given to free play. The balance between child initiated and adult assisted activities is heavily weighted towards the children making the majority of choices about their learning. Unfortunately, staff do not record much of what children learn whilst they undertake free play activities. Not all activities are provided with sufficient explanation or adult assistance, for example, children using a computer programme that introduced simple calculation, did not realise why an answer was right or not. They succeeded through trial and error rather than with understanding. The assessment records are made up of several documents; a daily planning and observation sheet; spontaneous observations recorded on post it notes and individual play plans. It is not, therefore, easy to identify how children are progressing towards the early learning goals, or the next steps required to address their individual learning needs. The next steps that have been identified are often very general and relate more to what the practitioner might do, rather than what the children already know, and might learn next. Much of the information staff know about the children is committed to memory and therefore appropriate challenges and the areas to explore next are not always identified in a formal or consistent way. The planning is flexible and allows staff to be led by the children; however, the educational content is sometimes lost because the emphasis is on what they enjoy, rather than what they learn. Not much thought is given to how the peripheral free play activities can support the main topic, missing opportunities to compound the children's learning. Children sometimes become restless when activities have lost their interest. Some staff recognise this quicker than others.

Most children are confident; they introduce themselves and are keen to find out about anyone new in the nursery. They talk about things that excite them with animation, for example, one child is very keen on aircraft and he gave an interesting and detailed account of the Hindenburg airship's history. Children take turns when they are playing and understand the rules to games helping them to play co-operatively. Some however, are still finding sharing difficult and will take the majority of the food at snack time, or want exclusive use of art materials. Children are chosen each day to look after different areas in the room encouraging a sense of responsibility. Their behaviour is good; staff encourage them to be kind to one another and they praise desirable behaviour so that it is repeated.

Children chat with one another and staff as they play. They enjoy rhymes and songs and are familiar with the words enabling them to join in successfully. Name recognition starts by using a photo and name together, providing success. Their names are also used on their pegs and children watch when staff write who is present on the whiteboard. Some children recognise letters in their name and know what sound they make. Some can write all or part of their name independently and are forming written letters correctly. Staff undertake some tasks children can manage, for instance, they will write children's names on their artwork even when they can manage alone. The books are not attractively displayed and children show more interest in the book corner when a member of staff is available to read to them. Children learn some key French words with a teacher who visits weekly; helping them understand that people communicate in different languages. Books are mostly used for pleasure rather than to locate information or to support a current learning theme.

Most children count successfully whilst they play but staff miss opportunities to include simple calculations that some of the more able children are capable of making. A computer programme that introduces children to calculation was not being used effectively because there was no adult support. Children explore ratio, weighing and measuring when they undertake cooking activities. Children recognise different shapes and are becoming familiar with their properties. Some children are beginning to use the correct mathematical names for solid shapes. They enjoy getting jigsaw puzzles out but they are invariably not completed. They play sorting and matching games. Most children know their colours, because staff naturally refer to colours regularly as children play.

The nursery has some very interesting technological resources, for example, a Roamer, which is a robot to teach children how they can programme something to make it move in various directions. Unfortunately, the batteries for this are not working and so although children can access the equipment, they cannot use it. Children enjoy using the computer and have good mouse control but sometimes require more adult support to use the software effectively. They use the digital camera and are learning how to compose photographs so that everything they intend to take ends up in the picture. They have recently visited the Rare Breeds Centre and this has prompted lots of detailed conversation about animals. They discuss the noises they make and what they provide for humans. Children have an understanding of time; they are able to put the hands of the clock to the correct position in a favourite book about different times of the day. There is a good selection of construction toys developing children's design and making skills.

Children are developing spatial awareness through activities like riding bikes and travelling through, over and under various climbing equipment. They play safely moving around without bumping into one another. They regularly use hand held tools; the nursery provides specially adapted tools so that left-handed children are not disadvantaged. They enjoy shaping and moulding malleable materials. They discuss healthy lifestyle choices, for instance, which foods are healthiest and the importance of regular teeth brushing.

Staff foster children's imaginative play. Children decided to make the role-play area a Post Office. Staff took them to the local Post Office to collect leaflets giving their game authenticity. Both boys and girls dress up regularly, they patiently manage to get their costumes on with very little help and use their imaginations as they role-play. Two children were pretending to go to the airport and several were animals continuing their farm experience. Children are experimental when they mix powder paints and gain a great sense of achievement when they mix colours successfully. Their artwork is individually styled and they are not inhibited whilst they are creating. A music teacher visits weekly to encourage children to explore different instruments, tone, rhythm and pitch.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily and have forged friendships at nursery. They are settled and

'at home'. They relate well to staff who are very kind to them. The nursery has a family atmosphere that nurtures the children from the baby stage until they are ready to go to school. All children are welcome; the staff ensure that children who speak more than one language are settled appropriately. They undertake activities enabling children to feel proud of their background and to inform the other children about things that are important to them, for example, a chocolate making activity was arranged for a child with a Belgian background.

Any child with learning difficulties or disabilities has an individual education plan devised for them by the special educational needs coordinator, and key worker, to ensure they reach their potential. Other professionals are consulted when appropriate.

Most children are very well behaved and encouraged to be kind to one another, for example, to share the sofa whilst reading books. They take an interest in what children are doing in other parts of the nursery and wave and chat to staff and children as they move about the nursery. Reward systems like smiley faces on the whiteboard are used to encourage good or kind behaviour. The children love this visual appreciation of their efforts.

The partnership with parents is good. The owners provide them with lots of information about how the nursery operates. At the end of every day, their child's key worker engages each parent in conversation about what their child has been doing, and shows them the observation record they have made. Parents appreciate this exchange of information and report how it helps them to talk with their child about what they have been doing. Staff work closely with parents and will consider requests from them to provide activities that consolidate what they are teaching the children at home. They also receive regular newsletters and take part in an annual survey enabling them to help influence how the nursery operates. The nursery owners are conscientious about saving the environment, and therefore, children are learning from a very young age about being responsible citizens. They use environmentally friendly nappies for the babies that attend. This saves parents money and brings environmental issues to their attention, having an influence on the wider community. Parents confirmed they are pleased with the service provided. Many parents have sent several children to the nursery and one parent decided to use St Bart's House after seeing children out with staff in the community. Parents can access their child's records at any time and two open days per year gives them the opportunity to talk in more depth to their child's key worker. They can contribute to their children's records if they wish. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The nursery manager visits all the rooms regularly, stepping in and helping staff when necessary. The daily routine is organised to ensure all children have the opportunity to be active, to rest and relax and to sit down and socialise at meal and snack times. When staff are changing the activity, after meals and before going out into the garden

children sometimes become restless if they are waiting too long. Children have key workers, which enables parents to have a constant person as a point of contact, to discuss their children's progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The owners have a recruiting policy that ensures staff are suitable to work with children. Most staff are full time providing consistency of care for children. The owners actively encourage staff to further their knowledge and training. Staff enjoy meeting people who work in other nurseries and use training opportunities to exchange ideas with other professionals. The owners are very proud of their staff's achievements and their qualification certificates are displayed for parents and visitors to see. They assess and are aware of the nursery strengths and weaknesses and are encouraging staff to make their own evaluations in each room. They support staff in areas they find more difficult, for example by word processing their records before parent evenings, helping them deliver information professionally. The balance between child initiated and adult supported activities is not balanced. Children are sometimes actively looking for more adult interaction. Using the assessment cycle to address children's individual learning needs requires further development, many of the observations are descriptive rather than evaluative and therefore children's progress is difficult to monitor. The owners are pleased with the progress staff are making in the delivery of the nursery education. The manager, with support from the nursery owners, continues to work for improvement through the 'National Day Nurseries Association Quality Counts' scheme. The manager asks staff to feedback to her how they believe they contribute to children's development in the five outcome areas. This provides her with the information to aid their development.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 equipment is washed or cleaned before it becomes grubby
- consider how to present resources in an attractive and inviting way to entice children to use more areas of the nursery
- consider how waiting time for children can be minimised when there is a change of activity, after meals and when going out into the garden

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 staff understand how to use assessment records effectively to inform the planning. Give further consideration to what the children already know and can do when planning children's next steps; ensure that the records make it clear to practitioners the desirable learning outcome to establish when children have achieved their goal
- use information books more effectively to consolidate the children's learning when exploring a particular theme
- ensure the most able children are sufficiently challenged
- consider the balance between child initiated and adult supported play to ensure children obtain sufficient adult interaction to extend their knowledge

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