



St Mary's Childcare

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	318583
Inspection date	04 January 2006
Inspector	Sharon Greener
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Registered person	University of Sunderland
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care, Crèche

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?

The University of Sunderland, Saint Mary's Childcare Centre opened in 1990. It operates from 5 play rooms, one of which is designated for use by the Out of School and Crèche groups. The centre is situated in Sunderland city centre. The centre is open 51 weeks per year, each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 65 children aged from 5 months to under 8-years-old on roll. Of

these, 19 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The centre supports children with special needs, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The centre employs 20 staff. All of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good personal hygiene through consistent daily routines, including hand washing before meals. Staff provide them with simple explanations as to why this is important to help them to stay healthy. Staff have a clear understanding of relevant procedures and present themselves as positive role models. Good hygiene standards are maintained throughout the nursery to ensure a healthy environment is provided for the children. Resources and equipment are regularly cleaned. Stringent toileting and nappy changing procedures are followed, staff wear disposable gloves and aprons. They also thoroughly clean changing areas, and wash their hands. Staff work in harmony with parents to ensure children's individual dietary needs are well met, and individual feeding routines are maintained for babies. Meals are social times when staff effectively promote children's independence skills and good manners. Information regarding what children have eaten and babies' liquid intake is recorded and shared with parents daily. Children are able to choose whether they want certain foods at meal times, but are encouraged to try different foods by staff.

Children benefit from fresh air, exercise and a varied range of activities and resources that encourage and enhance their physical skills. For example, outdoor play provides access to a range of equipment such as tunnels, slides, a balance beam, hoops, bats, balls, skipping ropes and pedal toys. Indoor physical play opportunities are provided during inclement weather, allowing children to play ring games, dance and move creatively to music. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance well to support their practice, and a good range of physical and sensory play experiences are offered for babies and younger children. Children are very well supported by staff and sufficiently challenged; they are encouraged to make use of the resources provided to test their capabilities. All children are able to rest and be active according to their individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean, warm and well maintained environment. They stay safe and secure, indoors and outdoors, through effective procedures. For example, the supervision of visitors and maintenance of security. Staff are vigilant and responsive to hazards, such as, spillages that are quickly cleaned up. Older children

are encouraged to help keep floors clear and willingly sweep up shredded paper and pick up unused toys. Staff carry out ongoing visual risk assessments throughout the day, as well as a more formal written weekly assessment. Suitable safety equipment is in place. Resources and equipment is well maintained. The organisation of the playrooms enables children to move around safely and freely. The children select and use toys independently within the constraints of safety, whilst under the close supervision of staff.

Staff fully understand the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect and preserve children's well-being. For example, those in respect of a lost child, uncollected child, outings and evacuation of the premises. Children show an increasing awareness of everyday safety within the setting. Sensitive reminders from staff, such as, requests not to rock on chairs or someone may fall and injure themselves, help children to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. Children's welfare is very well promoted and safeguarded by staff, who have a clear understanding of their role and responsibility concerning child protection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are given ample support, and are eager participants and enthusiastic learners, who are beginning to make choices about their activities. They build very close relationships with staff and peers, helping them to develop a strong sense of self and belonging. They show regard for others and respect their personal space. Children benefit from a good variety of activities including regular sensory experiences to support and enhance their development. Early communication skills are very well supported through high quality adult interaction. Staff's knowledge of children's individual developmental progress and appropriate use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework has a positive impact on children's achievements. Children show increasing levels of self-confidence. Their self-esteem is high and they make good progress.

Nursery Education.

Children receiving Nursery Education are based in their own playroom. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are very confident speakers and express their feelings, ideas and needs most readily. They enjoy looking at books and listening skills are developing well. For example, they can follow simple instructions, and listen intently to a range of music. They are beginning to recognise and name some letters and link them to the correct letter sounds. For example, those in their name, familiar words on labels or the letter of the week are displayed in the playroom. Children have regular opportunities to practice writing skills, which are developing well, they draw simple shapes, enjoy creating pictures and some are able to form recognisable letters. They count from one to ten with confidence and are beginning to show an awareness of concepts such as addition, subtraction and weight. Children have access to a good range of resources and learning opportunities to promote an awareness of the local environment and of how things live, grow or work. They are able to express themselves creatively through a variety

of activities and media, including paint, collage, sand, water, model making, role play, music and movement.

Staff regularly monitor and assess children's developmental progress. They have good knowledge of each child's individual stage of development. Activities are planned in accordance with the Foundation Stage Guidance and cover all six areas of learning. The method of monitoring and recording individual children's progress links to the stepping stones. Staff use the information gleaned to shape and inform future plans. However, opportunities to extend children's awareness of the similarities and differences of people and places in the wider world could be further developed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the time spent in a welcoming environment, which offers them independent access to a broad range of resources and activities. They settle quickly into the setting as their admission is tailored by staff to minimise stress, and they are acknowledged and valued as individuals. Children show increasing self help skills. For example, by attending to their own toileting needs where age appropriate. Older children are encouraged to serve their own food during meal times, within the constraints of safety. The setting has suitable arrangements to support children with special educational needs, or those who speak English as an additional language.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are consistently praised and encouraged by staff that have high, but realistic expectations of them. Children are developing a positive attitude towards others; they interact appropriately with peers, share toys and take turns. They show an emerging understanding of the local community, which is fostered through frequent outings and visitors to the setting. They have access to resources and activities that help raise awareness of the equal opportunity, diversity, and the natural world. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. They receive good quality written information about policies and procedures and other child related matters. Positive channels of communication are established and well maintained, through a variety of media. This includes newsletters, parent's notice boards, a comments box, regular verbal feedback and daily record sheets. These forms of communication ensure that parents are kept well informed of relevant information and events. They are offered appointments to meet formally with staff to discuss their child's progress and development. This helps staff to work alongside parents, in keeping with their wishes, so as to meet children's needs. Respective parents may access their child's records and are encouraged to contribute. An elected parent's representative also attends regular health and safety meetings, and has an input regarding related policies and procedures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management is good. The required policies and procedures are in place, including that in relation to the management and recording of complaints. Appropriate record keeping systems are in place, the majority of which are well organised and presented. However, an accurate record of children's attendance must be kept at all times, and the method used to record details of accidents and medication administered must preserve confidentiality. Children's care is given high priority; this is reflected in the effective and enthusiastic management of the nursery. Staff are committed to the ongoing improvement of the setting and are well motivated. They have access to relevant training and are well supported through team meetings, individual appraisal sessions and the 'open door' style of management. Staff have a clear understanding of policies and procedures, such as a sick child, administration of medication, and child protection. This underpins their practice and children benefit from the positive interaction and support given by staff. Morale is very good, which has positive impact on the operation of the setting and delivery of service provided.

The setting is well organised. A broad selection of purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities are provided which effectively promote and enhance children's learning and development. Staff working directly with children in receipt of nursery education are knowledgeable of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. Staff working with children under three-years-old use the 'Birth to three matters' frame work well to support their practice. Information regularly gleaned about children's individual developmental progress, links well to planning. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend, and they make good progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection, the provider was asked to develop policies and record keeping systems, improve safety, and children's access to resources. A lost child policy is now in place, and the child protection policy and the method of recording staff attendance and deployment have been reviewed and amended. Written information about the Crèche and Holiday Play scheme is in place and shared with parents. An impact absorbing safety surface is provided out doors, and safety mats for use indoors with large play equipment. Equal opportunity and imaginative role play resources are accessible to all children. This helps to improve the safety and care of children.

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

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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 confidentiality is preserved when recording details of accidents, incidents and medication
- ensure that an accurate record of children's attendance is maintained at all times
- include Ofsted's contact details in the complaints information shared with parents.

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):

- continue to further develop children's awareness of the similarities and differences of people and places in the wider world.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk