



St Nicholas Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	155709
Inspection date	18 May 2006
Inspector	Carol Cox
Setting Address	Church Hall, Church Road, Whitchurch, Bristol, BS14 0PR
Telephone number	01275-892633 or 07759 381610
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Registered person	St Nicholas Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 Nicholas Preschool has been operating for more than 25 years, it is managed by a voluntary committee, made up of parents of the children at the pre-school. It operates from the church hall at the side of St Nicholas Church in the village of Whitchurch, in Bath and North East Somerset. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00 during term times only. The children have access to a secure

enclosed garden for outside play.

There are currently 50 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these 45 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the village and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs nine staff. Of these, five staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from advisors from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive in a healthy environment where they have regular opportunities to enjoy fresh air and physical exercise. They have easy access to a range of well maintained tools and equipment and skilfully planned activities to promote both large and small muscle control. For example, children enjoy a carefully planned physical education session led by a student on work experience from a local school. They practise fine muscle control through adult led and self-selected activities using a range of tools and equipment, for example, children used a large construction kit to design and build their own models which involved hammering, screwing and connecting pieces. Physical activities are adapted to suit the needs of different aged children, for example, younger children enjoy circle games and physical exercise in their everyday clothes and older children follow a structured session of skills building.

Children's health is effectively promoted through good hygiene routines, such as the thorough wiping of tables with anti-bacterial spray before snack time and regular reminders to wash hands. Children enjoy nutritious snacks and drinks when staff join children at snack time and share fruit, drinks and lively discussions. Children have many opportunities to learn about how their bodies work through routine activities and planned topic work. Children are always accompanied to the toilet because of the layout of the building. However, they learn good independence skills through changing their shoes and clothes and pouring their own drinks at snack time.

Children's health and medical needs are effectively met because the staff have a clear understanding of the procedures for administering medication and recording accidents. A strict exclusion policy ensures that children are protected from the spread of infection. These policies are understood well by parents who inform staff when their child has been ill or visited the doctor. There is always a member of staff on duty who holds a paediatric first aid certificate, thus any minor accidents are appropriately dealt with.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a safe environment in which to learn and develop. Staff work

imaginatively to create a welcoming environment in the hall, which is used by other groups at times. Although the toilet is outside it is painted in bright colours and a step is provided to enable children to wash their own hands. Staff make daily checks of the premises and have a high regard for helping children learn about safety, for example, they practise crossing roads on local trips. Toys and equipment are well maintained and made easily accessible to children, who enjoy choosing their own playthings. Staff take advantage of high ratios of adults to children to make short visits to local amenities, for example, small groups of children visit the library at the local school.

Staff ensure children's safety through a good understanding of procedures. For example, the premises are securely locked and a clear policy ensures that only authorised people are allowed to collect children. The child protection policy is clear and shared with parents, staff know how to recognise signs of abuse and what action to take if they have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children make good progress in all areas and enjoy making choices about their own learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and use clear and well written observations of children's achievements when planning future activities to ensure the individual learning needs of each child are considered. Staff place great emphasis on children learning through play and their chosen activities and ideas. Children are grouped according to when they will start school and enjoy many opportunities to develop good independence skills. Children are confident and have high self-esteem which is carefully nurtured by caring staff who show great enjoyment in the children's company.

Knowledgeable staff plan carefully to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and children make good progress across all areas of the curriculum. They make particularly good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world and children show expert skills at describing their own community and environment. For example, when identifying their own addresses on a large map of the village most children are able to show the others where they live; one child was able to give clear and detailed directions to another child's house. Children learn about the lives and occupations of others through visits to local amenities, such as the estate agents and the school library and speakers who come to talk about their jobs. Recently a nurse, police officer, fire officer and paramedic have visited the pre-school. Staff support such visits with discussions, books and role play and children record visits with their own pictures and captions dictated to staff.

Children show good progress in mark making with many opportunities offered for children to use writing in meaningful situations. For example, in the role play corner children operate an estate agents office and write down details of customers needs, find appropriate house details and answer the phone to make appointments in the diary. Staff ensure that children develop their mathematical skills in everyday

activities such as counting cups at snack time. However, less experienced staff are sometimes not able to challenge children to extend their skills to introduce simple addition or subtraction. Staff provide good opportunities for children to practise their physical skills through planned activities using a variety of tools and equipment. Older children are encouraged to change their clothes for physical education in the summer term before they leave pre-school and most are adept at undoing buttons and zips and changing into plimsolls. Children follow instructions carefully and enjoy the challenge of instruction from a local sixth form student on work experience.

Children show very good imagination when playing in the role play area and with small world toys. They enjoy using different materials and media in planned activities, however, they have little opportunity to create their own ideas or explore and experiment freely with freely chosen materials and resources.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The pre-school's partnerships with parents is good. Parents are given clear information about the pre-school and are invited to share the children's assessment records regularly. The notice board and newsletters give information about the term's topics and parents are invited to help on a rota, they find this useful to learn more about the way their children learn. The prospectus includes information about the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Children are generally happy and well behaved. The pre-school staff talk to children about expected behaviour and about how their behaviour affects others. Good behaviour is appropriately praised and rewarded by staff. Children are confident and settled and show good self-esteem.

Parents share information about their children's care needs on registration forms and all the children have communication books which allow staff and parents to exchange information about each child's progress and changing needs. Thus, the needs of individual children can easily be understood and planned for. Children enjoy learning about the lives of people and other children's cultures and customs are valued and shared. For example, the mother of an Indian child visited the group to show them how to wear saris, eat Indian food and make divas for a Diwali celebration. Children learned about the role of guide dogs in empowering blind people through a visit from a guide dog puppy walker and staff arranged for children to visit their local church to join in harvest festivities. Staff help children learn to feel a sense of belonging by establishing routines where children can actively contribute to the well-being of the pre-school, for example, children understand why they need to listen to instructions and happily help tidy away toys in preparation for snack time.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from a stable environment where staff are committed to good

practice and on going professional development. The whole staff group work together to plan and prepare a range of play activities to promote children's learning and development. There are high ratios of adults to children and staff are deployed effectively to ensure that children are safe and well cared. All policies and procedures are well written and are shared with parents through clearly written brochures.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The managers involve all staff in meetings to discuss and implement changes, for example, the whole staff group are involved in the self-evaluation of the pre-school. Staff are well supported by their managers who are aware of areas for development and are actively working towards improvements. For example, the managers are writing prompt cards to support individual activities to ensure that less experienced staff can promote learning objectives appropriately for the children they are working with. The managers have drawn up clear guidelines for the recruitment of new staff and appraise staff annually. These appraisals are used to identify the training and development needs of individual staff and the pre-school.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to make some improvements, all of which have been made. Children now enjoy free access to drinking water, the doors to the kitchen and store room are secured appropriately, the regulator's details are included in the complaints procedure and the range of activities for children have been extended. Children now enjoy a safer and more stimulating environment. The education inspection raised four key issues, three of which have been fully actioned and one which is still being addressed. Children now have much freer access to resources and are encouraged to extend their independence skills by writing their names on work and pouring their own drinks at snack time. The parents' notice board is displayed outside the main doors at the beginning of each session and a new prospectus has been produced which gives parents clear and well written information. The pre-school now provide many opportunities for children to learn about the lives and cultures of others and children enjoy access to a wide range of resources to promote their learning. The managers continue to develop a system to support staff's understanding of how children learn and ensure that they include learning objectives when planning activities.

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.

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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):

- offer children more choice of resources and equipment to promote their independence skills

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):

- provide more free access to materials, media and resources to enable children to freely express themselves creatively
- continue to develop and support staff's knowledge and understanding of how to promote and extend children's learning in all areas

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