



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 650135

DfES Number: 512474

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 02/03/2004
Inspector Name Susan Catherine McGarry

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Marys Playschool
Setting Address St Marys Church Centre
The Chase, Great Baddow
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 7JU

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Marys Playschool

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Marys Playschool
Address St Marys Church Centre
The Chase, Great Baddow
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 7JU

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

St Mary's Playschool opened in 1968. It operates from St Mary's Church Centre in Great Baddow, Chelmsford. The playschool serves the local area.

There are currently 117 children on roll. This includes 68 funded 3 year olds and 16 funded 4 year olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:00 each day and from 13:00 until 14:45 on four afternoons.

Twenty four part and full-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

St Mary's Playschool provides good care for children.

There is a good staff team working well together in each of their classrooms and within the playschool as a whole. The setting is very well organised and full use is made of all the space and resources available. Each classroom has a very good range of resources and attractive, informative displays are in place. Almost all of the staff hold childcare qualifications and an appraisal system identifies further training needs. Staff regularly update their skills and knowledge. Records, policies and procedures are readily accessible within the operational plan however there are some which require updating. These are stored securely and confidentiality is observed.

Most of the procedures and arrangements for children's safety and security in the setting are in place and staff pay particular attention to this, which ensures that children can play safely. The policy for child protection requires updating. Individual

children's needs are identified and met and there is strong commitment and support for children with special needs. The playschool's current practice is not fully reflected in their equal opportunities statement. Snacks are provided during the sessions and dietary requirements are recorded and catered for.

There is a very good broad range of activities provided including extensive use of the outside play areas. Children relate well to each other and are provided with opportunities to make decisions about their play. Adults who respond sensitively to their individual needs and interests support them with excellent levels of interaction. Children are given praise and encouragement and their behaviour is managed well.

The parents are provided with good quality information about the playschool and have daily contact with the staff. Each child is allocated a key worker who is available to parents. Children's progress and development is recorded and shared with parents on formal occasions.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The action identified at the last inspection has been addressed with details of Ofsted included within the complaints policy.

What is being done well?

- Children are provided with a broad range of activities and play experiences. Full use is made of outside play areas and indoor facilities, such as a large hall and indoor courtyard, to extend play and learning opportunities already provided within each of the classrooms.
- Children are grouped usually according to age with the youngest children attending the afternoon sessions. Each classroom has extensive resources which are effectively organised so that children can access them.
- The staff team are thoughtfully and efficiently deployed throughout the setting. Their training needs are clearly identified through an appraisal system, which works well.
- There is a positive and proactive approach to children with special needs with high levels of contact and involvement with other professionals and parents all working closely together to meet their individual needs.
- There are good levels of safety and security within the setting.

What needs to be improved?

- the policies for equal opportunities and child protection
- partnership with parents to ensure there is a fuller understanding of how the setting operates.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?**The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection**

Std	Recommendation
12	Review and further develop relationships with parents to accommodate their individual needs.
14	Review and update policies for standards 9 and 13.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at St Mary's Playschool is of a high quality. It enables children to make very good progress in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. The accommodation and resources are being used extremely well to support the learning taking place. Very good relationships exist between children and staff with high expectations of behaviour. Children's learning is being promoted effectively through the provision of activities that are interesting and hold their attention but also provides them with time to explore and extend their skills independently. The staff are using their knowledge of the early learning goals to plan appropriate activities and experiences for the children. Plans include learning outcomes, identified resources, vocabulary and language to be used and some adaptation to meet differing needs. A written evaluation is recorded onto activity plans.

Children's progress towards the early learning goals is being recorded by key workers, but is not yet fully linked into the stepping stones or the short term planning for the next step of learning to be clearly identified in all of the six areas of learning for individual children.

Leadership and management is very good. The staff work closely together and meet regularly to plan. The manager supports the staff and provides a good link between parents and the staff team. The setting has close links with outside agencies and has regular visits from professionals supporting children with special needs. The staff reflect on the provision of nursery education and care and the outside play areas have recently been upgraded.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are well informed with good quality written information. Staff discuss children's progress and development through daily contact and more formal channels. Requests are made to parents to share information about their children when they first start attending the playschool.

What is being done well?

- Children's progress in all areas of learning is very good. They form very good relationships with staff and their peers and confidence levels, self-esteem and independence are all nurtured. Children's behaviour is very good.
- Partnership with parents is constructive and informative with high quality written information conveyed. There are regular opportunities for an exchange of information between parents and staff.
- The accommodation and resources are used very effectively to support children's learning and there is a high level of planning undertaken by the staff in each of the classrooms. This provides children with a stimulating

environment in which to play and learn.

- Children have extensive opportunities to explore and investigate materials and objects. They have a wide range of practical activities to access which are clearly linked to the stepping stones and are appropriate to their level of development.

What needs to be improved?

- the evaluation process used to monitor the quality of nursery education
- the setting's ability to further evaluate and assess their own strengths and weaknesses.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made in addressing the two key issues identified at the last inspection.

Staff are providing children with more opportunities to use a variety of resources and make more choices about what they use when engaged in junk modelling activities. Children are being encouraged to use scissors more regularly and prepare their own templates.

Parents are provided with a record sheet at the point of entry which requests details of their children's development and preferences which the staff can refer to.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn in an environment in which there is time and space for them to focus on activities and experiences. They are able to select from a very good range of resources and work with confidence both independently and in a variety of group situations. Children are secure and have good self-esteem resulting in effective relationships with adults and each other. They are learning to co-operate and work together well when opportunities are presented.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children's communication skills are developing very well. They express their imagined experiences, thoughts, feelings and ideas with adults and each other during a range of play opportunities. Children are learning to name and link sounds and letters and to recognise familiar words. They practice and explore their writing and handwriting skills through a range of activities provided and enjoy listening to stories, joining in with singing and have access to a very good range of books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children use number in everyday situations and can count reliably up to 10 and beyond. Their skills are being extended through a number of games and planned activities. They recognise numerals through displays and other visual means. They are given opportunities to use calculation but require further challenge. Staff provide a very good range of practical activities to promote understanding of shape, space and measures and children are using mathematical language to describe and compare them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children confidently use a variety of equipment, tools and materials to build and construct in two and three dimensions. Children have a clear sense of time, place and some awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others through topics covered throughout the year. Children have opportunities to independently access everyday technology including computers. There are many worthwhile opportunities provided for children to use their senses to investigate and explore objects and materials.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities that offer appropriate physical challenges so that they can practice and refine their skills using large and small equipment. Children can handle tools, objects and malleable materials effectively, safely and with increasing control. They run and move confidently during games and activities, showing an awareness of space both for themselves and others whilst engaged in various activities within the setting and when they are outside.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children can express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings using a range of materials and tools in art, technology, construction activities and messy play. They use their imagination through detailed role-play. They take part in an extensive range of activities in which they can use their senses throughout the playschool. Children respond positively to experiences provided for them such as food tasting, painting self-portraits and listening to different types of music.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT

There are no significant weaknesses to report, but considerations should be given to improving the following:

- There are no significant weaknesses to report but consideration should be given to the following:
- consider and implement a system for the use of a more formal evaluation and review of practices.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.