



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 101639

DfES Number: 520413

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 23/11/2004
Inspector Name Angela Cole

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Catharine's Under Fives
Setting Address St Catherines Church Hall
London Road
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 3HW

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name St Catharine's Under Fives 1051904

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Catharine's Under Fives
Address St Catherines Church Hall
London Road
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL1 3HW

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 Catharine's Under Fives opened in 1969 as a committee-run group. It operates from the church hall in the grounds of St Catherine's Church in a residential area in Gloucester. A maximum of 24 aged from two years to under five years children may attend the group at any one time. The setting is open each weekday except Thursday from 09.30 to 12.00 during term time.

There are currently 25 children aged from two years nine months to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The group currently supports children with special educational needs and some who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs four staff. Two of the staff, including the manager with teacher status, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group has close links with two local primary schools. Support is also given by a mentor teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, a Foundation Stage consultant and fieldworkers from the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association.

How good is the Day Care?

St. Catharine's Under Fives provides good quality care for children. The playleader is highly qualified and experienced. The plans for the day-to-day operating of the group work well in practice and a high ratio of adults to children is offered. Procedures to deputise are most effective. The premises are clean, well maintained and made welcoming with colourful displays that include children's work. Very good use is made of the available space, both indoors and outdoors. Good quantities of suitable, safe toys and equipment are set out for each sessions, and many reflect positive images of different cultures. All of the required policies are held by the group. Records are accessible and high regard is given to confidentiality.

The children are kept safe. Staff are vigilant at all times and have sound knowledge of child protection. Children learn good hygiene practice after toileting though sometimes use a communal towel before eating. The first aid box is regularly

checked, but some accident records are not signed by parents, and parental permission is not sought for emergency medical advice or treatment. Drinks are provided regularly. Staff are actively aware of children's dietary requirements and provide good quantities of healthy snack foods.

The children's care, learning and play effectively meet their individual needs. Staff are developing systems to closely observe the children to help them plan the next steps in their play and learning. All children are skilfully included in the group's routines and their needs are well met, including those with special needs. Highly appropriate procedures for managing behaviour are fully shared with parents and are consistently applied.

There is a strong partnership with parents and carers. Much information about the children is shared verbally and families regularly receive open invitations to share the developmental records. They are warmly welcomed and parents are regularly consulted over their children's care.

What has improved since the last inspection?

After the last inspection, the setting agreed to revise some policies and procedures. Children are now safer as a visitors' record is maintained and the fireguards are raised so they do not become too hot. The care of children has been enhanced by the revision of some policies. Procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer, and if a child is lost or uncollected, are now in place. A system has been devised to ensure the times of arrival and departure of the children and staff are recorded.

What is being done well?

- Children are highly stimulated by a very good range and balance of activities in all areas of their development. Staff closely observe the children and regularly evaluate the play to help them in future detailed plans for learning. Adults are very interested in the children, listening carefully to their ideas and responding with enthusiastic support.
- The group has recently raised considerable funds to purchase many high quality toys and items of equipment. Children now have very good access to a wide range of appropriate learning resources for both indoor and outdoor play.
- Staff have high regard for safety. The play areas are checked before and during each session and detailed risk assessment is completed for the premises. The premises are kept secure and access to the provision is closely monitored to keep all persons safe.
- Staffing arrangements and resources are thoughtfully adapted to support children with special needs. Staff are up-to-date in their knowledge of the 2002 Code of Practice through recent training in order to ably support children with such needs.
- Committee members and rota volunteers are given very good information to

enable them to manage and assist the staff. This includes accessible written material and regular opportunities to model good practice.

What needs to be improved?

- the procedures to seek parental permission for emergency medical advice or treatment, and to obtain a parent's signature on each accident record
- the children's hygiene practice with regard to hand drying before eating.

PREVIOUS COMPLAINTS (This section applies only to inspections carried out from September 2004. The complaint record relates to complaints from the last inspection or 1st April 2004 whichever is later.)

There are no complaints to report.

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
7	Request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment, and ensure the parents sign the written record of children's accidents.
7	Ensure good hygiene practice is in place regarding hand drying before snacks.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

St. Catharine's Under Fives provides high quality nursery education that enables children to make very good progress towards the early learning goals (elgs) in all six areas of learning.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have, or are gaining, effective knowledge and understanding of the elgs. Appropriate systems of curriculum planning and assessment are now adopted and staff are developing these to effectively foster the children's learning. Plans include adult deployment and detailed evaluation of expected learning outcomes. Staff consistently challenge children to make very good progress through the stepping stones, though there is scope to include these in written plans. Some excellent methods are used to teach the children, including those with special needs. The management of children and their behaviour is mostly very good and a system of key workers is planned. Within the limitation of the premises, very good use is made of time and resources to foster children's independence and decision making.

The leadership and management of staff are very good. Clear aims are shared with all the families, and senior staff have excellent vision and development plans for the group. There is efficient teamwork, and newer staff are fully supported and sensitively included to extend their skills. The group shows high ability to assess its strengths and areas for improvement. New systems are closely monitored and effectively evaluated, and close regard is given to outside advice. These aspects illustrate the high commitment shown to improving the care and education for all the children.

The partnership with parents is very good. Families are well informed about the provision. They exchange much information about the children, though there is scope to develop the sharing of children's progress records. Parents are fully encouraged to be involved with their child's learning through management, fundraising for resources and highly valued, day-to-day support.

What is being done well?

- Children settle well into the group and, as far as possible, are fully supported to become independent and to make choices. They play well together and gain very good confidence and self-esteem.
- Children develop very good language and listening skills to enhance their communication and extend their mathematical ideas. Staff enthusiastically share stories and children are keen to count to solve simple problems.
- Children's creativity is highly valued using a wide range of materials and media. Stimulating imaginative areas are provided and role-play is very well supported. Children have very good opportunities to extend their own ideas,

such as using the 'rocket cone' pattern to make a 'party' hat.

- Some excellent teaching methods include emphasis on learning through play, clear instructions and high expectations for behaviour. Staff skilfully foster opportunities for making choices, for example, when children plan the session's outdoor play. There is very good, spontaneous use of children's ideas, including musical instruments taken outdoors.
- The relationship with parents is very good. Families receive ample information about the group and its Foundation Stage provision in the starter pack, on notices and newsletters, and at parents evenings. Much information about the children is shared informally and parents are clearly told that they have access to any records of their children at any time.

What needs to be improved?

- the inclusion of the stepping stones in written planning
- the active sharing of children's progress records with all families during their time at the group.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Staff have made very good progress in implementing the action plan developed in response to points of consideration in the previous inspection. They have addressed the weaknesses in knowledge and understanding of the world and the quality of teaching.

Staff now plan regular opportunities for children to show an interest in information and communication technology. They have further developed the system of assessment of children's progress to be clearly linked with the early learning goals and the stepping stones.

The improvements made have had a positive impact on children's learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children settle quickly and there is excellent interaction with the attentive adults. Children enthusiastically explore the wide choice of activities set out. They gain good self-esteem, for example, through regular use of their names and independent working, and show pride in their achievements. They clearly make connections between home and the group. Overall, children are well behaved. They play well together to share toys, such as trains, and to take turns at games and on the computer.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children use clear speech in conversation and learn many words such as 'second' and 'marble'. They confidently share feelings and ideas, creating simple stories, for example, about jigsaw animals 'in the rain'. Children listen well to instructions and rhymes, learning to give rhyming words and initials of their names. They enjoy books and find a certain picture at story-time. Children use one-handed tools competently and are keen to 'write' their ideas for outdoor play and 'messages' in cards.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children show enthusiastic interest in numbers and solving simple problems. They often use number words in play, saying 'two' jigsaws are completed and a brother is 'eight' years old. Children count each day to find the numbers of people present and name cards collected. They often compare groups of toys, asking for 'one more brick' and comparing sets of toys animals. Children's interest in shape, space and measure is very strong, saying objects are 'under', cut in 'half' and getting 'smaller'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children spontaneously explore and discuss a wide range of objects and materials, including items brought from home. They also investigate exciting resources, such as light sources and cooking ingredients. Children have excellent opportunities to make their own designs from recycled materials and construction bricks. They show keen interest in everyday and information technology, including computer programs. Children gain a very good sense of time and frequently recall events and special days.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children are well aware of their own physical needs. They move freely and enthusiastically respond to rhythm and music, for example with ribbon sticks. They repeat a range of movements and some are sufficiently co-ordinated to scissor jump. They negotiate around obstacles on well-controlled ride-ons and can stop. Children use a wide range of large and small equipment, including toy crates and a 'box car', to push and balance. Very good skills are shown with small tools such as pens and scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children have excellent opportunities to use their own ideas to explore colour, texture and make three-dimensional structures. For example, they experience a relaxing 'sensory' room, push dinosaurs through a home-made 'swamp' and design complex models from recycled materials. Very good use is made of musical instruments, for example, to imitate outdoors the sound of tree-cutting. They join in favourite songs and enthusiastically create fast, slow and soft actions and sounds as they sing.

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 improving the following:
- continue to develop written planning for children's learning by including the stepping stones
- consider further ways of sharing the records of children's progress with parents and carers.

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.