



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 130769

DfES Number: 519988

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 14/06/2004
Inspector Name Christine McInally

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name St Nicholas Pre School
Setting Address St Nicholas Church Hall
Saltdean Vale, Saltdean
Brighton
East Sussex
BN2 8HA

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Nicholas Pre-School

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Nicholas Pre-School
Address St Nicholas Church Hall
Saltdean Vale, Saltdean
Brighton
East Sussex
BN2 8HA

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 Nicholas Pre-school has been registered for over twenty years, and is managed by a parent run committee.

It operates from St Nicholas Church Hall, situated in Saltdean on the outskirts of Brighton.

The pre-school is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 09:15 to 12:15, and on Monday and Thursday from 12:30 to 15:30, during term time only. There are currently 59 children on roll, who attend a variety of sessions, including 25 funded three-year-olds and 7 funded four-year-olds. There are no children attending identified as having special educational needs nor any for whom English is an additional language. The children attending are representative of the local community.

There are seven members of staff, of these five hold recognised child care qualifications and the other two have good experience of caring for young children.

The pre-school receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

The standard and quality of care at St Nicholas' Pre-school is good.

The pre-school is well organised and staff work well together as a team. They provide a warm, child friendly environment where children are happy and settled. There is an effective operational plan in place which guides the staff team in their daily practice, although some staff are unsure of the written policies. All the relevant paperwork is in place. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of health and hygiene issues, there are good safety measures in place and children are safe and well cared for.

Staff plan and provide an interesting range of worthwhile topics and activities,

helping children make good progress in all areas of development. Staff have a good knowledge of each child's needs and interests. They form warm, caring relationships with the children who are happy and confident to try new experiences. The pre-school organises the space and resources well, and while children enjoy choosing from the activities provided they have limited opportunities to choose for themselves the resources available.

There is an effective partnership with parents and good links are forged between the pre-school and home. They are provided with useful information about the pre-school, however, the information passed to incoming committee members is limited. The regular exchange of information on children's progress ensures that their individual needs are well met. The pre-school has a web site which provides a further source of information for parents.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Children enjoy an interesting range of activities and topics, which supports their early learning and they are making good progress in all areas of development.
- Staff form warm, caring relationships with the children and know them well. They spend a lot of time talking and playing with them. Children are happy and confident.
- Staff offer consistent praise and encouragement and are confident in their management of children's behaviour. Children readily take part in activities and are happy to tidy away resources.
- The good adult to child ratios within the pre-school. Children receive a lot of one-to-one support ensuring their individual needs are well met.

What needs to be improved?

- opportunities for children to choose the resources available
- the information provided for new committee members
- all staff's working knowledge of the policies and procedures.

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
2	Ensure staff have a working knowledge of all the policies and procedures included in the operational plan.
5	Provide opportunities for children to be involved in deciding what resources are available each day.
12	Devise and implement procedures to ensure new committee members are provided with information on their roles and responsibilities.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision of nursery education at St Nicholas Pre-school is acceptable and of good quality. It enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals, although there are some minor gaps within the educational programme. Provision for their personal, social and emotional development is particularly well planned and children make very good progress in this area of learning.

The quality of teaching is generally good. Staff plan a variety of activities and understand what children learn from them. They use a variety of teaching methods and groupings, however large group teaching is less effective. Activities for funded children are presented in an enthusiastic manner, but are not always extended to provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the older more able children. Resources are of good quality and well organised to support children's learning, they are regularly rotated ensuring children have opportunities to use all of them. Good use is made of the outdoor area to support all six areas of learning.

The pre-school has an effective assessment system in place which enables them to record the children's progress towards the early learning goals. The information gathered is used well to inform the planning.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is generally good. The staff and committee have an understanding of their varying roles and responsibilities, they attend regular meetings where the provision is discussed, However, there is no formal system in place to monitor and evaluate the educational programme or the quality of teaching.

Partnership with parents is very good. Clear written information on the educational programme is available, more general information on the pre-school, and the current topic, is provided through the regular newsletters. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the pre-school and to contribute to their child's records.

What is being done well?

- Children's personal, social and emotional development is given good emphasis. Children are happy, confident and interested in the activities offered. They are developing good self-esteem along with an awareness of others needs.
- Communication, language and literacy skills are developed well. Children are confident speakers, enjoy books and understand that writing can be used for different purposes. Some children can write their own names and are beginning to form letters correctly.
- Staff question children effectively and give them good support in their chosen

activities. Children are well motivated to learn.

- Space and resources, both indoors and out, are used positively and effectively to support children's learning.

What needs to be improved?

- the organisation of 'circle time' when all the children come together
- the opportunities for children to further develop their personal independence skills
- the availability of creative materials that allow children to express themselves freely using a variety of resources
- planning to include extension ideas and activities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress in addressing the key issues raised at the last inspection. More opportunities to handle made objects and to use everyday technology are available to the children and are used well to support their learning. They are provided with regular opportunities to practise and develop their balancing skills and are making good progress in this area of development. The group still use work sheets with the funded children but on the whole they are age appropriate and are used to consolidate their learning.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are happy and well settled. They choose confidently from the activities provided. They share and take turns well. Their work and contributions are valued and they are developing good self-esteem. Observed relations are good, children easily engage in conversation during daily routines and planned activities. They show a consideration for others, they are developing a sense of right and wrong and behaviour is good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident speakers, they listen well to each other, to instructions and at story time. They use language well in their role-play activities as they explore real and imagined experiences. They enjoy books and often 'read' to themselves handling books appropriately. They recognise their own names and are beginning to understand that writing can be used for different purposes, with some children beginning to write for themselves.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children count confidently to 10, and beyond, and use comparative language, such as longer and shorter developing their understanding of mathematical concepts. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations and show that they understand size and shape through practical activities. They are developing an awareness of weight and capacity through the use of resources such as sand and water.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

Children learn to explore and investigate as they engage in topic work. They develop their designing and making skills as they build and construct using a variety of materials. Staff consistently encourage children to talk about past and present events. Children use everyday technology in their imaginative play and have regular access to programmable toys. They extend their knowledge of other cultures through using a range of suitable resources and interesting topics.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children move confidently around the nursery showing a good awareness of space and others. Good use is made of the outdoor area where children play imaginatively with the range of equipment available. They are learning to handle tools such as pencils, brushes, knives and scissors with increasing skill. Children are developing an understanding of the links between health and bodily awareness, for example they are encouraged to drink plenty of water in warm weather.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children's learning is well supported by a variety of activities such as role-play, art, music and dance. They have good opportunities to use their senses. Children are actively encouraged to use the imaginative play area and to engage in meaningful role-play. However, creative activities such as painting and gluing are not always available on a daily basis or presented in a way that allows children to express themselves freely.

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally 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: THE KEY ISSUES

- evaluate the organisation of 'circle time' and ensure staff maintain the same high expectations for good behaviour and listening that they have in all other group situations
- provide more opportunities for children to further develop their own personal independence, for example, by pouring drinks for themselves at snack time
- increase the availability of creative materials that allow children to express themselves freely.

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.