



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127605

DfES Number: 521006

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 05/03/2004
Inspector Name Jane Wakelen

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care
Setting Name St. Mary's Nursery
Setting Address Western Avenue
Ashford
Kent
TN23 1ND

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of St Marys Nursery

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name St Marys Nursery
Address Western Avenue
Ashford
Kent
TN23 1ND

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 Nursery opened in 1994, with the current manager being in post from September, 1999.

It operates from a purpose-built building on the same site as St. Mary's Church of England Primary school, consisting of an entrance area, cloakroom, two play areas and an office. There is a play area outside which is hard standing.

There are currently 55 children aged from two and half to five years on roll. This includes 19 funded three year olds and 11 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports three children with English as an additional language. At present there are no children with special needs attending.

The group opens five days a week during school term time only. Sessions are from 09:00 to 12:00 or 13:00 to 15:00. Funded children attend 12:30 to 15:00 if they attend an afternoon session. Children have the opportunity to stay 09:00 to 15:00 at parents request.

Four staff work directly with the children. They all hold an early years qualification to NVQ level III. 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 Nursery provides good quality care for children.

All staff hold an early years qualification and have a good understanding of child development and the Early Learning goals. The staff provide a bright, welcoming environment through the displays of children's work on the walls and the good quality equipment in place. They make maximum use of the available space and use one small room for quiet time, such as books, and the second main room for all other activities. There is a playground to provide for outside play and the nursery has use of the school hall, when it is not being used by the school.

Staff are aware of hygiene procedures and ensure they are implemented. They have a good understanding of safety issues and promote safety awareness with the children. Healthy eating is promoted at snack time, with staff providing a variety of snacks throughout the week. All children are encouraged to participate in the various activities on offer, with staff being fully aware of the individual children's needs.

Effective planning ensures children have access to a wide range of interesting activities, using a variety of resources, both indoors and outside, to promote all six areas of learning. However, children have limited use of large climbing apparatus to develop their balancing and spatial awareness skills. Children's behaviour is good and are caring towards each other. They have a good understanding about right and wrong, through adult role models and positive reinforcement through praise and encouragement.

Partnership with parents is good with parents being encouraged to contribute their knowledge, skills or time to the group or serve on the committee. They are kept informed about the nursery events through the notice board and regular newsletters every half term. Parents are reminded about viewing their child's assessment records but there is no formal time made available at present.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Not applicable.

What is being done well?

- Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities throughout the session. They have a good understanding of the Early Learning goals and stepping stones and this is reflected in their plans.
- Premises are bright, welcoming and portray children's work around the walls. There is a good range of equipment and resources which are well maintained.
- Procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the children and to ensure hygiene methods are implemented.
- Staff promote healthy eating by offering a range of snacks throughout the week and are fully aware of children's dietary requirements.
- Children have a good understanding of right and wrong, which is enforced through positive rewards such as praise and encouragement from the staff.

What needs to be improved?

- the policies; to ensure they are updated in line with National Standards and contain all relevant information
- the fire drill; this needs recording to assess its effectiveness
- the risk assessment; a short term risk assessment needs implementing to

ensure risks are monitored and reviewed

- the time given to reviewing children's assessment records between the parents and staff.

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
6	Devise and write a short-term risk assessment and ensure the fire drill is recorded to ensure it is effective.
12	Implement a formal time to share children's assessment records with the parents.
14	Ensure all policies are updated and amended to contain all relevant information regarding the National Standards.

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

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision is acceptable and is of high quality. Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals. Children are making very good progress in four of the areas of learning. They make generally good progress in physical and creative development.

The quality of teaching is very good. Staff have a sound understanding of the Early Learning Goals which is reflected in the planning and assessment procedures. Resources are of good quality and well organised, providing children with a variety of activities both indoors and outside. However, areas such as music and dance are not fully exploited allowing children to use their imagination. Staff show enthusiasm and make activities fun, encouraging children to join in the activities, allowing them to make choices and to be independent learners. Staff have a good understanding of child development and promote children's positive behaviour through praise and encouragement and building their self esteem.

Leadership and management is very good. The committee provides a good support for the supervisory staff, who in turn work with the staff, to provide an effective team. The supervisor ensures staff have a yearly appraisal, to encourage personal development for each staff member. Staff meetings take place on a regular basis to ensure all staff are kept fully informed about nursery events, policies and are able to contribute to the planning.

Partnership with parents is very good. Parents are kept fully informed about nursery events and information through regular newsletters and the noticeboard. They are able to talk to staff at the beginning or end of the session on an informal basis. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the group through the committee or to share skills or knowledge with the children. Parents are encouraged to view their child's assessment records at any time, but at present there is no formal opportunities to ensure all parents view their child's records.

What is being done well?

- Children form good relationships with adults and peer group, they show a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to sit quietly in group activities, with good concentration skills.
- Children are developing their letter and number recognition through everyday activities. They are aware that print carries meaning and use counting skills for routine activities and nursery rhymes.
- Children are provided with an excellent range of activities promoting all six areas of learning, following a wide variety of interesting topics, supported by outings and visitors relating to the topic.

- Staff have a sound knowledge of the Early Learning Goals and the stepping stones which is reflected in the planning and assessment and the activities offered to the children. Staff are enthusiastic, motivated and interested in the children and the care they provide.
- Staff work well as part of a team sharing good relationships with colleagues and children, promoting children's good behaviour with praise and encouragement.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities for children to use large equipment on a regular basis to promote skills of balancing, climbing and spatial awareness
- the use of resources in the area of music, to help children gain an understanding of rhythm, recognize sounds instruments make and match movement to music.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The group were given three key issues to address from the previous inspection. They have made very progress on all three issues.

The first key issue was to address the assessment records for the children. To record children's achievements and monitor their progression, ensuring that all children's needs were met and parents were kept informed of their child's progress. The implementation of new assessment sheets ensures children's achievements are recorded in all six areas, their progress is monitored through the stepping stones and keyworkers ensure the needs of the individual child are met. Parents are reminded to view their child's progress records at any time, but a formal system will be implemented.

The second issue concerned the planning system, to ensure all areas were covered, with particular attention being given to maths, enabling children to solve simple mathematical problems and show an awareness of simple number operations, using everyday objects. The planning now covers all six areas in both the medium and short term plans. Staff use adult focus activity sheets, which list the area of learning and the stepping stones relevant to the activity. Number operations were observed during routine activities, such as snack time, when children were asked to count the chairs and then count the children to sit at the table.

The final issue related to the book corner, to ensure children could view the covers of the books, to be encouraged to look at books on their own and ensure books reflected a multicultural society. The book area is now bright and welcoming. Books are displayed on wire racks so that the covers face to the front, books are displayed on the boards and low level shelving. There was a good variety of books promoting diversity in society.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They form good relationships with each other and adults, helping to build their self esteem. Children show good concentration skills and offer information from their own experiences when participating in large group work. They are encouraged to be independent and select resources for themselves. They are developing a good understanding of right and wrong and their behaviour is good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They show enjoyment and enthusiasm when interacting and talking with adults and peer groups about their own experiences. Children enjoy singing simple rhymes and songs from memory with the help of actions and enjoy sharing books and listening to stories. Children are developing their letter recognition skills and are able to name words beginning with the same letter, understanding that print carries meaning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. Children count for a purpose many times in the day, such as numbers of chairs at snack time. They are beginning to use simple number operations such as more or less and combining two numbers. Children recognize shape, colours and sizes and are beginning to name 3D shapes. They learn the importance of number in everyday situations, such as the post office and numbers on the clock.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Very Good

Children make very good progress in this area. They use technology to extend their knowledge of literacy and numeracy and understand how the computer works. They learn about the natural world through caring for gold fish, they grow bulbs and seeds and observe changes in the seasons and weather. Children have the opportunity, in celebrating a variety of festivals and celebrations from around the world, to learn about diversity in society.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children make generally good progress in this area. They develop their fine motor skills through use of threading and peg boards and use tools such as rolling pins, pencils and scissors with control and precision. Children are developing skills such as balancing and spatial awareness, but are not given regular opportunities to use large apparatus to practice these skills. Children are able to peddle tricycles and can manoeuvre around obstacles.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
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Children make generally good progress in this area. They use a wide range of resources and materials exploring colour, texture and shape and explore natural materials such as sand and water. Role play activities are varied and interesting, encouraging children to use their imagination to act out various roles, such as the postman. Children participate enthusiastically in music sessions, but these are not offered on a regular basis and children are not encouraged to match movement to 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:

- Ensure planning includes activities to promote gross motor skills on a regular basis, to allow children to practice climbing, balancing and learn spatial awareness using large equipment.
- Expand children's use of music and instruments to gain an understanding of rhythm, to recognize repeated sounds and sound patterns and to match movement to music.

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.