

# St. Nicholas Pre-School and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

---

**Unique reference number**

EY337295

**Inspection date**

20/01/2011

**Inspector**

Lynn A Hartigan

**Setting address**

The Community Centre, Fallowfield Road, Colchester  
Garrison, Colchester, CO2 9LL

**Telephone number**

01206 816597

**Email**

sandra.chippe@btconnect.com

**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

## **Description of the setting**

St Nicholas Pre-School and Nursery has been registered since 1965. It operates from a purpose built nursery and is located within Colchester in Essex. There is a large enclosed garden available for outdoor play.

St Nicholas Pre-School and Nursery is registered to care for 70 children at any one time, aged from one to five years. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register. The nursery is open each weekday, from 9.15am until 12pm and 12.45pm until 3.30pm. Sessions operate during school term times. There are currently 144 children on register aged from one to under five years. There are strategies in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 19 members of staff, including the manager, of whom all have appropriate early years qualifications. Several members of staff are currently training which includes training at degree level.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

All children experience good levels of care and attention, have fun and are making good progress through the early learning goals whilst attending the nursery. Safeguarding arrangements are good and staff have a sound understanding of how to protect children and they are vigilant within the nursery to ensure the children feel safe. Children are very settled and happily participate in a range of activities, which include some play opportunities to explore and use natural materials. Good planning of activities include an abundance of excellent opportunities for children to develop their understanding of diversity so each child's unique background is superbly supported. Good systems in place enable staff to monitor and evaluate the provision, although the impact on children is not always identified. However excellent partnership working with parents greatly enhances the process to improve the outcomes for children.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop/extend opportunities for babies and younger children to explore and experiment with natural materials
- ensure self-evaluation clearly identifies specific areas for future improvements in practice, and the impact on outcomes for children.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded from harm, as staff ensure good procedures are in place that underpin their practise. Children are cared for by staff that have completed all required suitability checks. As the nursery is based on the army station, further checks on staff are completed by the Army Welfare Office. A safeguarding policy is understood by all staff, who have a sound understanding of how to effectively support any concerns they may have, with regard to the children's well-being. Some staff have completed recent safeguarding training courses. This is viewed as a priority by the management team to ensure they are up-to-date with current practises and legislation with regard to child protection issues.

Children play in a safe environment as detailed daily risk assessments are undertaken. Hazards are clearly identified, as is how they should be addressed. Good staff ratios ensure children are supervised well whilst they play. The nursery environment is bright and welcoming to both children and their families. Extensive notice boards with information for parents, photograph displays and children's artwork contribute to an exciting, fun place to learn. Children are comfortable, safe and secure within their play environment and are provided with good quality resources and equipment that is appropriate for the children attending and is, in the main, easily accessible.

The nursery team places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of its work. Staff are skilled and effectively ensure children are integrated well. Excellent opportunities are available for parents and carers to contribute to the decisions made within the setting that affect their children. Superb communication with the parents ensures the children's unique requirements are met to a high standard and this is a strength of this setting.

The nursery is based on an army station and most children attending have parents in the army and/or are from the Commonwealth. The diverse cultures of children attending are embraced by the nursery staff. Excellent strategies are in place to ensure every child's uniqueness is valued and celebrated. For example, children's registration forms are offered in preferred languages and plans are in place to provide a pictorial prospectus. Makaton is learnt by staff and it is intended to be used as a universal language throughout the nursery.

Excellent partnership with parents and carers ensures every child receives consistently high levels of support from an early age. Effective communication with other settings children may attend ensures staff know the children well and are able to effectively support their individual needs.

The management team demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of continued improvement. They are able to demonstrate their vision for the nursery and discuss action plans already in place. A systematic procedure for self-evaluation, that clearly identifies the outcomes for children, has not yet been developed. Emphasis is given to staff training which is strongly encouraged and

supported. This ensures staff have the opportunity to refresh and build on their existing knowledge.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

All staff demonstrate a good understanding of how children learn and of the development requirements within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children's progress is promoted well to a good standard as a result. Observations are documented within each child's learning profile and parents are invited to comment regularly on their child's development. In addition parents are able to make comments on the 'Learning Journey Wall' and this assists staff in clearly identifying the next steps of learning, which informs future planning. Children's scrapbooks include meaningful photographs of children at play. Beautiful displays and photographs around the nursery document what the children have achieved.

The organisation of the playrooms enables children to freely access many resources that provide good opportunities for challenge. Babies and young children enjoy sensory play using natural materials, such as shredded paper, compost and shells. Some treasure baskets and feely walls are available to them. However opportunities to self-select, explore and discover for themselves are limited. Older children show a keen interest in their learning and are able to initiate their own play. For example, a favourite story 'A Bear Hunt' prompts a host of activities, such as a treasure hunt outdoors. Children draw and follow maps and are delighted when they find a box of golden coins.

Children enjoy mark making. Younger children use magnetic drawing toys, aqua mats, water and brushes outdoors. They draw in the snow and mix paint in the puddles, having great fun splashing whilst mixing colours. Children are learning about weight and measure as activities such as cooking moon cakes encourage children to think about measurement and volume. Rhyming and number songs reinforce children's understanding of mathematics. Staff listen with interest to the children who have formed close attachments to them. Staff are good role models and promote positive behaviour and children delight in receiving stickers for good listening.

Diversity is reflected in every area of the nursery. Excellent provision is in place to support children whose parents are in active service. For example, most rooms have camouflage nets where children can post letters and notes to their parents. They draw pictures of or provide photographs of their soldier mum or dad and these are displayed here. Children and parents can post wishes on a prayer tree. Staff send treasured photographs and reports to parents on tour, to ensure they are informed with regard to their children's activities.

Different languages and cultures are celebrated each month. An abundance of resources, posters and photographs displayed around the nursery depict diversity. A dedicated sensory/quiet room is available to support children who may require additional help. The nursery's special educational needs coordinator and the staff are enthusiastic and provide superb opportunities to ensure every child reaches

their full potential.

The staff use real life situations to educate children on how to stay safe. For example, when walking in the environment, road safety is introduced and discussed. Children participate in fire evacuation drills. Children benefit from healthy snacks such as fruit and vegetables and opportunities for children to play outdoors ensure they have sufficient time for fresh air and exercise.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
---	-----

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
--	-----