

# St Nicholas Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 130769  
**Inspection date** 16/02/2011  
**Inspector** Fler Wright

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**Type of setting** Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## 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*.

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## Description of the setting

St Nicholas Pre-school has been registered since 1994 and is managed by a parent run committee. It operates from St Nicholas Church Hall, in Saltdean on the outskirts of Brighton, East Sussex. The pre-school is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The pre-school is open Monday to Friday, term time only. Core hours are 9am to 12 noon, although some children attend to 12.55pm for a lunch club. Tuesday sessions run from 9am to 12 noon. The pre-school is registered to care for 30 children at any one time and there are currently 37 children aged from two to under five years on roll. The nursery receives funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school are able to offer support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to those children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school employs a total of six staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are five staff present during each session.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is inadequate.

The pre-school does not adequately promotes the needs of the children. There continues to be no clear systems for assessing how well some of them are progressing towards the early learning goals within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is unaware of some of the weaknesses identified, and they are failing to meet a number of specific legal requirements relating to risk assessments, children's learning and observational assessment. Insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection, and the pre-school has an inadequate capacity to improve, which has a detrimental impact on the outcomes for children

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

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

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- conduct a risk assessment and review it regularly - at least once a year or more frequently where the need arises (Suitable premises, environment and equipment) 02/03/2011
- plan and organise systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and 02/03/2011

- development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs (Organisation)
- keep a record of the risk assessment clearly stating when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken following a review or incident (Documentation) 02/03/2011
- undertake sensitive observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's individual needs (Organisation). 02/03/2011

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- create a stimulating environment outdoors that offers a range of activities which will encourage children's interest and curiosity
- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development in order to improve the quality of provision for all children
- maintain the two-way flow of information with parents to promote a shared understanding of children's individual needs and involve parents in practical ways to support their child's learning and development.

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

Staff have received recent training in safeguarding and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. All existing injuries are now recorded, helping to ensure robust records are held in the event of a cause for concern and the member of staff in charge of child protection issues is well aware of the procedures to follow in this instance. There is an appropriate procedure in place to ensure the suitability of all staff, and this has improved since the last inspection. Daily risk assessments are completed helping to ensure a safe environment for all children. However, the last main risk assessment was carried out in April 2009 and has not been reviewed since, which is a breach of a specific legal requirement as this was over a year ago and compromises children's safety.

All staff are qualified and are able to interact effectively with the children to ensure they enjoy their time at the pre-school. However, some of the 'record of achievement' folders created for children to record their progress are completely empty, despite children attending for many months. This greatly limits the planning of purposeful play to provide individual children with an enjoyable and challenging learning environment to ensure their needs are met. The pre-school does not make effective use of self-evaluation or reflective practice techniques. As a result little improvement has been made and there have also been various managerial changes over the past year, which have impacted upon the routines and procedures in place. This also means they have not effectively met some of the recommendations set at their last inspection. However, a new manager has been appointed very recently and staff already feel supported by her. She is ambitious, and has many informal plans for improving the setting that will be implemented in the near future to improve the quality of the provision for children.

The environment is planned to ensure there are a wide variety of activities and experiences available to children on a daily basis. Resources are in plentiful supply and staff say that they rotate these regularly to ensure children remain interested in the items available. Most areas are set up well and are conducive to learning, although the book area is uninspiring in comparison. However, children do visit it regularly, and look at books throughout the session. The outdoor area is secure and children are able to access it freely when it is in use. However, it is not an effective extension of the indoor environment and does not encourage children's interest and curiosity as most of the resources available outside are used to encourage physical play, especially during the colder months.

A satisfactory partnership with parents is encouraged through regular newsletters, parental consultations and informal chats. Parents are able to settle their children upon arrival although they do not come into the room at the end of each session, restricting the potential for them to feel more involved with the pre-school and their child's learning. The lack of information in some of the children's 'record of achievement' folders greatly restricts the ways information can be shared with parents about the ways their child is progressing. There are no children attending other childcare settings at the present time, although staff are aware of the importance of establishing a good relationship with them from the outset. Equality and diversity practices are generally satisfactory. There are some children on role with English as an additional language, and these children are supported appropriately although they speak English well so do not require any assistance from outside agencies. There are two special educational needs co-ordinators who have both attended training in this area. There are no children on role with identified additional needs at this time, although staff talk to parents about any concerns that they have as and when they arise. However, these specific observations are not recorded, making them harder to share with others if required.

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

Children enjoy the time they spend at the setting and freely explore the activities and play opportunities available to them. They have access to a generally safe environment, which is checked daily. They learn how to keep themselves safe during every day situations such as playing in the toy cars in the garden, or moving around their play space through gentle, thought-provoking reminders from staff. They are confident in their surroundings, and access the items they want to play with themselves from the selection on offer. These are planned to ensure children experience a balanced curriculum throughout each session. Play is child-led and staff support children appropriately by sitting with them to read a story, or helping them do a jigsaw. Children enjoy playing independently or with their friends, and especially enjoy group times and eagerly join in with action songs and stories during circle time.

Children enjoy healthy snacks and packed lunches from home, and have access to

water and milk that most children are able to confidently pour themselves. They understand, and are very used to, familiar routines such as washing their hands before they eat, and happily undertake these tasks as a matter of course. Children eat snacks of fruit that they bring in from home, and if they forget, staff have raisins and breadsticks to offer them so that they do not go without. Some children stay for packed lunches and enjoy these as a group. They interact well with each other and staff make it into an enjoyable social experience as they also sit with them and eat their lunches at the same time.

Children behave well, and younger children are helped to understand the concept of sharing through egg timers that are used as a visual aid for children to look at. Once the sand has run out, they are asked to share the toys with their friends, and they happily do this showing that staff are managing their behaviour appropriately. Children celebrate a variety of festivals such as Chinese New Year and enjoy cultural role play areas with Chinese food, and cooking noodles for their snack during this time. The range of resources to promote disability and a variety of different cultures and has improved since the last inspection helping children to acknowledge and accept their differences.

Children's interests loosely inform the planning which includes a range of interesting activities and experiences, to help ensure that children enjoy their time at the setting. However, they are not planned to further individual learning as children's next steps are not identified by staff. It is very difficult to identify how well children are progressing as their starting points are not always obtained and there is no assessment process in place. Each child has a 'record of achievement' file that includes observations and photographs of what they know, can do, and understand. However, some of these are completely empty meaning children's individual capabilities are not appropriately catered for. Children are therefore not able to build effective skills for the future as their next steps are not identified to help them achieve and make good progress in their learning.

## 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> | 4 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement                                     | 4 |

### 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>            | 4 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement         | 4 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources                                           | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity                             | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding                                                                    | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 4 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships                                                                    | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers                                | 3 |

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

|                                                                  |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 4 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|

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

|                                                                  |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b> | 4 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning    | 4 |
| The extent to which children feel safe                           | 3 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles            | 3 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution        | 3 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future       | 4 |

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