

St. Mary's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 127605
Inspection date 28/06/2012
Inspector Sara Garrity

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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.

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Description of the setting

St Mary's Nursery is committee run and opened in 1994. It operates from two rooms in a separate building in the grounds of St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, Ashford, Kent. They have a secure outside play area.

The nursery is registered on the Early Years Register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to care for a total of 24 children. There are currently 46 children on roll aged from three to four years. Children come from the local area. The nursery is funded to provide free early education to children aged three and four years. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning English as an additional language. The nursery is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm, term time only.

The nursery employs seven members of staff. The deputy holds a foundation degree and is studying for her Bachelor of Arts in Early Years. Five staff hold relevant National Vocational Qualifications at levels 2 to 4. The nursery receives support from the Local Authority, and they hold the Kent Quality Mark (the local authority quality assurance scheme). They are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and have strong links with the school on site.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are excited and eager to enter this friendly and welcoming nursery. Staff offer the children a wide variety of stimulating activities, overall, which enables them to make good progress in their learning. The staff have developed generally strong relationships with parents and other agencies, to foster an inclusive environment. Self-evaluation is effective and staff have identified strengths and weaknesses within the nursery. All staff demonstrate a commitment to maintaining continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the way in which snack time is carried out, to give children time to pursue their learning without interruption, and to return to activities
- strengthen the two-way flow of information with parents, for example by making learning journeys more accessible
- provide as much opportunity as possible for children to move freely between indoors and outdoors throughout the day.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Well-developed safeguarding procedures are in place and staff know how to protect children. Several staff members have attended child protection training. The manager has completed the designated person training. Staff recruitment is robust and the manager and committee check that all adults who work with children are suitable to do so. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed, and implemented by all staff. Risk assessments are in place and staff minimise any risks in the playroom and outside area. Fire drills are practised regularly enabling all children to take part and these are recorded accurately. All relevant written documentation is completed fully, and confidentially stored. Most staff hold a paediatric first aid certificate and have undertaken food hygiene training.

The manager works closely with the committee to ensure the smooth running of the nursery. The manager encourages all staff to contribute ideas to the self-evaluation process, exploring ways to drive improvement in the nursery environment and procedures. The well-established staff team provide a warm and sociable environment. The views of the parents and children are taken into account and changes have been made to the environment to reflect the children's interests. The staff team are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery, and make effective use of support from the local authority's 'Setting Improvement Partner' to develop action plans.

The planning of activities is based on the interests and developmental needs of the children. Children's progress can be seen through observations recorded in the children's learning journeys. These observations, alongside the staff's knowledge of their individual key children, form the basis of the nursery planning. Staff offer activities which challenge and stretch the children's ability. Children have access to a broad range of resources. All staff communicate thoughtfully with the children encouraging them to take part in group activities. Daily routines are well established, however opportunities to maximise the outdoor environment are not always fully utilised. The nursery actively promotes equality and diversity. Staff have a secure knowledge of the children's backgrounds, and provide resources and activities which enable the children to learn about their own and other cultures.

The nursery is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and outside agencies. They have established supportive links with the school on site, as well as other schools in the area to support the smooth transition of all children. Staff have established clear channels of communication and parents talk to them at the beginning and end of the session. Parents attend regular meetings with their child's key person to look at the assessment records and talk about their child's progress. However parents need to ask to see their children's learning journeys at other times. Parents report they are extremely happy and feel well supported and welcome in the nursery.

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

The children are making good progress in their learning and development. There is a good mixture of adult-led and child-led activities. Children move freely between activities exploring colours on the painting table as well as developing problem solving skills with funnels and containers in the water tray. The children have opportunities to investigate; encouraging them to become critical thinkers and active learners. However, opportunities for children to continue with their chosen activities are lost when everything is put away to allow everyone to have snack time together.

The children demonstrate good self-esteem and confidence. They are motivated to learn about the world around them, eagerly explaining the different stages the caterpillar will go through before becoming a beautiful butterfly. The children demonstrate they are comfortable in the nursery environment, enthusiastically finding good places to hide as they interact with friends for a game of hide and seek. All children exhibit a strong sense of security; they talk across the garden fence to their friends at school, as well as interacting with staff and readily communicating with adults who visit.

Children have a good understanding of how to keep healthy. They sit together for a healthy snack and have access to drinking water at all times. Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy packed lunch and staff sit with children at meal times to discuss what they have been up to during the morning. Exercise is a positive experience for the children who are encouraged to take part in fun exercise sessions, to wake them up and get them stretching. The nursery has recently taken part in the Kent Healthy Early Years Pilot; which they have continued to use, to encourage the children to take more exercise. This is now part of their daily routine and offers opportunities for the children to learn about their bodies and how exercise makes the heart beat faster. The children cannot wait to go outside to run around and investigate the bugs and sensory plants.

Children develop effective skills which contribute towards their future learning. They are becoming familiar with technology; children use the computer keyboard to spell out their names, as well as practising hand-eye coordination using the mouse to move the shapes on screen. There are plenty of opportunities to practice mark making inside as well as in the garden. Books are easily accessible and children enjoy looking at these and listen to stories individually or in small groups; the staff promote their interest in books by providing good opportunities for children to describe the pictures.

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

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

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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