

St Clare's Day Nursery

St James Church Hall, Tower Road, Clacton On Sea, Essex, CO15 1LF

Inspection date	13/03/2013
Previous inspection date	14/02/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		3
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children develop close relationships with their key person. They enjoy each other's company and form friendships with their peers.
- Children play and learn in a relaxed environment.
- Children's safety is given high priority. Practitioners encourage children to develop their understanding of safety issues through activities and discussions.
- Children enjoy going for walks in the local area, enabling them to explore the geography of their local environment and to meet new people.

It is not yet good because

- Effective planning and assessment is not implemented consistently. This results in some practitioners demonstrating limited knowledge of how to observe children and how to use these to plan challenging experiences for all children.
- Children whose home language is not English have little opportunity to develop and use their home language in play and learning.
- Children are not provided with regular opportunities to develop independence during everyday activities.
- Those in charge have not yet effectively developed their use of monitoring, reflection and self-challenge to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and precisely identify its strengths and weaknesses.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in each of the three playrooms and the garden.
The inspector held discussions with the manager, deputy, special educational needs coordinator, equality and inclusion coordinator, practitioners and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector looked at a range of records including children's personal details, staff details, accident and medication records, risk assessments, written policies, information about children's learning and records of complaints and staff meetings.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the end of the morning session.

Inspector

Lynn Hughes

Full Report

Information about the setting

The St Clare's Day Nursery was registered in 2010 and is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. It is situated in a church building in the Clacton on Sea area of Essex, and is managed by a limited company. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from three playrooms and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 14 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and above.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 8.30am until 3.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 92 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. It supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- implement effective and consistent use of observations and assessment to plan challenging and stimulating learning experiences for all children
- ensure that opportunities are provided for children whose home language is not English to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- improve experiences for children, which enable them to fully guide their own learning and develop independence skills, for example, by participating in the preparation of snack and being able to choose when to play outdoors
- use monitoring, reflective practice and self-challenge more effectively to promote consistency of practice throughout the nursery, and gather and use the views of children, parents and staff to help set challenging targets for improvement that will raise the levels of children's achievements over time.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Practitioners demonstrate a basic understanding of how to promote the learning and development of children. Children make appropriate progress in their learning, taking into account their starting points, because practitioners provide them with satisfactory support. Practitioners observe the children in their key person groups and use their observations to assess their progress. They identify some next steps in learning, however this is not carried out regularly enough to provide a robust assessment of what children need to learn next to accurately plan for their future progress. Planning of learning activities and experiences are very general and often based on a theme or topic. This provides limited opportunities for practitioners to tailor the planning to meet individual children's learning styles or needs.

Children actively participate in a range of free-play and some adult-led activities. They select resources from the low-level storage units presented in each of the three playrooms. Children enjoy the company of their friends and seek adult interaction to help to extend their play. For example, children presenting a puppet show, enjoy having an adult to perform to. Some practitioners make use of children's home events to inspire discussions and to reassure children. For example, a lively discussion takes place around children needing to go to hospital for a minor operation. Practitioners involve other children in the discussions and use appropriate language, such as 'tonsils', 'operation' and 'doctor', to promote the children's understanding of what is going to happen.

Children learn to take turns and cooperate as they join in with a fun board game. Practitioners support this learning well, by sitting with them and helping them to move their playing piece to the appropriate place. Children clearly enjoy this activity and wait patiently for their turn.

Children learn about the world around them as they regularly go for walks in the local area. For example, they visit shops, the beach, a small petting farm and enjoy environmental walks. They have also had the opportunity to visit a local theatre to see an art exhibition. There are a number of children within the nursery for whom English is not their first language. However, there are limited opportunities within the educational programme for these children to develop and use their home language during their play and learning, to support their language development at home.

Children are appropriately prepared for their next stages of learning, for example, by practitioners giving careful consideration to preparing them for school. Reception class teachers from local schools are invited to visit the nursery and practitioners present a range of school uniforms in the role play areas during the summer term. This enables children to become acquainted with their new teachers and school uniforms.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Children form appropriate bonds and relationships with their key person and other practitioners. There is an informal 'buddy' key person system in place, which ensures that children always have a familiar adult to go to if their key person is absent. Practitioners are caring and attentive to the children's needs, giving them cuddles and reassurance when required. This results in happy children, who enjoy their time at the nursery. Effective settling-in arrangements, promoted by all practitioners, enable children to settle quickly into nursery life. Parents play an active role in the settling-in process, staying with their children until they feel they are secure and content. Some children show a sense of belonging, for example, when they place their coats and bags on their named coat pegs and when they place drawings, pictures and examples of creative work in their labelled drawers to take home. Children understand the nursery's behaviour rules, for example, they line up carefully to walk to and from the toilets to wash their hands and when they get ready to put their coats on to play outdoors.

Children are developing an understanding of safety and how to keep safe, as practitioners remind them about walking carefully indoors and being kind and caring towards each other. Practitioners encourage children to consider healthy eating through discussions about foods which are good for them. Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks, such as grated cheese, cucumber and crackers. They sit together with their friends for a group snack time and practitioners use this time to chat calmly and discuss their children's interests. While this provides good opportunities for group discussions, it inhibits children's freedom to guide their own learning by making choices about when to take their snack. The presentation of snack time, also provides few opportunities for children to develop independence skills by playing an active role in its preparation or planning. Regular routines within the nursery enable children to develop a suitable understanding of their own care needs, for example, they understand the importance of hand washing before snack and lunch time.

Children regularly play outdoors, in one of two large gardens. They actively participate in physical play opportunities, such as throwing and catching balls, riding a range of bikes and vehicles and negotiating space. While opportunities for outdoor experiences are provided regularly, children again have limited opportunities to make choices about whether they play and learn indoors or outdoors.

Children move through the three pre-school rooms according to their age and stage of ability. There are some systems in place for supporting children's transitions between the nursery rooms. For example, all three rooms operate in similar ways to aid consistency. Children visit the room they are going to move into with their key person, enabling them to become familiar with the new surroundings and to get to know the new practitioners working in that room.

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

This inspection took place following concerns raised with Ofsted about the lack of clear management, allegations of poor practice not being investigated or addressed and practitioners' working hours being cut. The inspection found that there have been issues relating to poor management in the past. A new manager has been in post since January and has made a number of changes and improvements. Complaints logs and minutes of meetings between practitioners and management show that some issues of poor practice have been brought to the previous manager and committee's attention and have been resolved. In order to manage the nursery more effectively, the new manager has had to make some financial decisions, which have resulted in practitioners' working hours being reduced. She is aware that this has caused some unrest within the practitioner team, however, is confident that these changes will soon embed.

There is a programme of activities and opportunities throughout the nursery, which help children to make some progress towards the early learning goals. Not all practitioners demonstrate a secure understanding of how to use their observations effectively to plan for children's next steps in learning. Therefore, the educational programme is inconsistent. There are some procedures in place for the management team to monitor and review the educational programme. However, these are not yet robust enough to ensure that every child is offered challenging and exciting learning opportunities.

Children are appropriately protected from harm, as the nursery has clear written procedures in place for safeguarding children. Practitioners update their safeguarding knowledge and expertise through appropriate training and in-house meetings. The nursery has a clear safeguarding policy in place, which all practitioners are aware of. All adults working with children or having regular contact with them are appropriately vetted. Proof of their suitability and clearance is held on file. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment.

Practitioners attend annual appraisal meetings, which enable them to discuss and identify their strengths and weaknesses with their manager and members of the committee. More regular supervision meetings are being introduced to enable the new management team to more effectively address underperformance and to identify ongoing training needs. The nursery has some systems in place for reviewing and evaluating the provision through reflective practice and self-evaluation. For example, the equality and inclusion coordinator has conducted an inclusion audit and has an action plan in place for further improvements she would like to implement. There is a training plan in place, to ensure that all practitioners regularly update core training, such as first aid and safeguarding. However, monitoring of practice is not robust and self-evaluation lacks rigour and does not routinely take account of the views of practitioners, children and parents. As a result, practice is inconsistent across the nursery and not all plans for change are precisely targeted at raising children's levels of achievement.

Parents spoken to at the time of the inspection are complimentary of the nursery and comment on issues which are important to them. For example, they state that practitioners are friendly and approachable, creating an atmosphere of trust. They feel that their children make good progress and that the nursery supports their children to receive appropriate interventions where required. Partnerships with other early years

settings and local schools are satisfactory, and provide appropriate support for all children, particularly at times of transition.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are **Met**

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY415398
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	903930
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	92
Name of provider	St Clare's Day Nursery
Date of previous inspection	14/02/2011
Telephone number	01255427629

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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