

St Clare's Day Nursery

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

Inspection date	23/06/2014
Previous inspection date	16/12/2013

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		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Children make good progress because they choose from stimulating, well set-out activities. They become fully engrossed as they work and play at their own pace, supported by staff who have a very good understanding of how children learn and develop.
- Children's unique needs are very well understood. The key-person system is successful in helping children form effective emotional attachments. This ensures that their individual care needs are met.
- Safeguarding of children is given the highest priority. All staff are trained to recognise and respond to any concerns regarding children's welfare. Parents are informed of the nursery's responsibility with regard to child protection.
- Staff are confident in their roles and work well as a cohesive team to provide a strong care and learning environment for all children. This is because recent changes have had a positive impact on the organisation and operation of the nursery.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The outside area does not yet match the inside in terms of providing a stimulating, print-rich environment to promote literacy, and stimulate conversation and investigative play.
- Current systems for monitoring and supervision sometimes focus more on the training needs and less on the impact of staff's practice on teaching.

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 and interacted with children in the playrooms and outside area, and viewed all areas of the nursery.
- The inspector held discussions with the provider, senior staff, assistants and apprentices, and carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector looked at a sample of documentation including policies and procedures, evidence of staff checks and qualifications, the prospectus, planning and assessments, development profiles and incident and complaint records.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents spoken to at the inspection, and written comments within children's development profiles.

Inspector

Sarah Williams

Full report

Information about the setting

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 Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. It is managed by a committee. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from two rooms and there is an enclosed area available for outdoor play. The nursery employs 15 members of childcare staff. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years qualifications at levels 2, 3 and 4, including one practitioner with Early Years Teacher Status. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, term time only. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am, with lunch from 11.45am until 12.30pm, and afternoon sessions from 12.30pm until 3.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 78 children on roll, all of whom 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 with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- extend and strengthen the programme for literacy by, for example, providing more signs and text in the outdoor area to help children gain an understanding of the uses of print in different contexts, and to stimulate discussion about the environment, including features from the natural world, to enhance their knowledge and understanding of life cycles, recycling and seasonal change
- undertake more sharply-focused supervision to support staff going through transitions, such as new ways of working, to ensure a consistent approach and to tease out staff's particular strengths and talents to enhance and extend their practice and improve outcomes for children.

Inspection judgements

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development. They gain the skills and attitudes they need for future learning. Children are ready for school, independent and able to direct their own learning through active choices and decision making. Teaching is good and founded on a sound understanding of how children learn. Staff provide challenging and stimulating activities to engage children and encourage them to think creatively. For example, a construction set with a limited colour palette encourages imaginative use. Children are inspired to combine it with larger than life plastic bugs and it becomes a 'spider house'. Other open-ended resources are provided, including trays of

shaving foam for experimental making of marks, and water and brushes which the children use for 'magic painting'. This enables them to practise their control when using a brush and, because it is water, the results are temporary, so they can confidently paint without fear of making a mistake. This means when it is time to write with pens and pencils they are prepared to have a try. Role-play areas are themed and changed regularly. A selection of school uniform items placed close to a mirror gives children a chance to try them on and rehearse their start of school life. Staff support a hospital play scenario with costumes and props so children can act out play versions of real life situations and discuss their feelings and experiences with staff. Children enjoy play indoors and outside. The nursery has two outdoor areas which are used well to allow children to explore and move freely. They engage with a range of equipment which cover all areas of learning. For example, books are placed on a rug under a shady gazebo for browsing in a relaxed manner. A mud kitchen is supplied with tools and implements to encourage free play and exploration. Children enjoy seeing what happens when they mix mud with sand, water, stones and leaves. This very open-ended play encourages creativity and free expression. The older children happily practise for their annual sports day, cheering on their friends as they balance hoops and run with balls. They are learning to take turns and listen to instructions. However, the outdoor area currently lacks sufficient text and signs to fully promote the development of children's literacy and inspire them to explore fully, and ask questions about, their environment.

Expectations for children's achievements are high. Staff complete a baseline assessment when children first start. This is based on information from parents, provided either verbally or included on an All about me form. Staff start to observe children straight away and note what they can do. By including children's interests and planning for them individually, the educational programme is tailored uniquely. This is to ensure that each child has the best chance to make maximum progress. Regular assessments and tracking of children's progress over time, shows how they are developing. This also enables support to be provided where there are any gaps in achievement or performance is lower than expected. A progress check for all children aged between two and three years is carried out. The results are shared with parents so that additional support can be provided for any child not reaching expected levels of development.

The partnership with parents and carers is valued and effectively supports children's progress and development. Several children at the nursery have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator works closely with parents and carers as well as seeking advice and support from outside professionals, who visit regularly. Children have individual education plans with clear, carefully devised targets for the next steps in their learning. These are regularly reviewed and adjusted when outside support from other professionals, such as paediatricians or educational psychologists is received. Support for these children is very good and a strength of the nursery. Parents and carers speak very positively and highly of the staff and appreciate the support they and their children receive.

Children develop secure emotional bonds and attachments with the adults caring for them. This enables them to become increasingly confident and independent. They demonstrate this as they follow routines and grow in their ability for self-care. For example, at lunch time, children line up to wash their hands and then find their place at the table, where they manage their own lunch boxes. The key-person system is well established and staff understand their role in building a firm relationship so that every family has a distinct point of contact. Parents approach the key person with any queries or concerns, or to discuss and clarify how they can help children at home. Children's next steps are displayed on the wall in each playroom for parents to see, enabling them to coordinate activities at home to complement and reinforce nursery learning.

Children's behaviour is good because they understand the simple and consistently applied rules. They are reminded to use kind hands and indoor voices. These rules are backed up with pictorial cues displayed on the walls. Staff speak calmly to children and listen constructively, so children feel their verbal contributions are valued. Children know that by speaking to staff any disputes are quickly settled fairly. Any behavioural incidents are recorded and discussed with parents at the end of the session. Similarly, any accidents are recorded to be signed by a parent, and children receive first -aid from trained staff.

The environment is well laid out, with resources which are clearly labelled and accessible to children. This encourages them to choose what they want to play with. Children can challenge themselves and take risks as they try new equipment for climbing, balancing, and riding up and down the paths. Staff allow children to persevere and stay at an activity for as long as they wish. This develops concentration and promotes children's thinking and problem-solving skills. Safety and security are fully considered both within the playrooms and in the outside areas. Staff are carefully deployed to ensure that children remain in sight or sound at all times and cannot disappear into hidden spaces unseen. Recent changes to the arrival and departure of children have improved the flow at these busy times. Parents now use both entrances depending on which room their child is based in. This allows them time to speak to staff if they wish or come in and view their child's development profile or look at wall displays. Transitions at all stages are very well managed so that children have time to adjust. This starts with the first transition, from home to nursery, and then between rooms. For example, because children regularly see the other children in the nursery and mix with them at different times during the day, they quickly become familiar with the new children and staff in the room they are moving into. They also benefit from planned visits of gradually extending time, so that when they move up a room they do so with little fuss. Children are emotionally well prepared for these stages and then the move to 'big school', when the time comes. Meeting their new teacher when she visits nursery, and again, visiting the new setting a few times, helps them think about the changes ahead and any anxieties are allayed by talking about them with familiar and supportive staff.

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

Children are protected from harm and abuse because staff have a secure understanding of safeguarding matters, including child protection. The manager and assistant manager have recently attended the designated person higher level training. This enables them to take a lead role in ensuring that all staff have an understanding of how to respond to concerns about a child's welfare. This inspection was prioritised following a visit from Ofsted. Information was received which raised a concern about staff, and about the management of a child protection concern. This resulted in an action being set by Ofsted. The nursery was asked to review the procedure for reporting concerns and for conducting an internal investigation, to ensure that correct procedures are followed. Ofsted received a satisfactory response which confirmed that the management had taken action to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of the correct procedures to follow. In addition, this inspection found that the manager has reassessed her practice and attended further training. She is now confident that she can fully meet this aspect of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Recruitment is the responsibility of the committee. Any vacancies are advertised with clear job descriptions. Candidates are subject to rigorous interview and induction processes. New staff are only employed once the full range of checks are complete to ensure they are suitable to work with children and able to carry out their role efficiently.

Staff provide good-quality teaching which contributes towards children's achievements and helps them make good progress towards the early learning goals. This is because staff understand how children learn and are becoming increasingly reflective practitioners who consider and refine what they do, so that they can meet children's development needs. Reminders and prompts relating to the areas of learning, and how children can be supported to achieve well, are displayed all around the playrooms. This also allows parents to see and make sense of what children do and how they learn through well-planned, active play. Each child's progress is tracked by their key person. Senior staff analyse and track the progress of every individual, as well as the different groups of children attending. This allows them to see any gaps or areas where children are performing less well. A rigorous process of monitoring staff's performance includes regular supervision, observations of staff as they work and an annual appraisal. This serves to identify staff's training needs and informs their individual professional development. To date the supervision and appraisal have not been fully interactive, and plans are in place to enable staff members to more fully participate and express their ideas and views on their own performance. In addition, there is scope to further extend and refine the supervision process and tailor it to staff who need more support, and to tease out strengths and talents which will have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

A strength of the nursery is the very good level of support provided for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Internally, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator oversees the individual care and learning plans for each child who has identified additional needs. She works closely with the key person and parents to ensure that children receive the timely support that helps them make progress and catch up with their peers where possible. Links with other external agencies and professionals are well established. Every step is documented and filed carefully so that the full range of information, including reports from hospital visits, paediatricians and speech therapist are available to those who need them. There are a number of children attending with speech

delay and other communication problems. The local speech therapist works with individual children in a unit based in the local hospital, next door to the nursery and liaises closely with the nursery so that they can continue the exercises and ideas she uses to promote their progress. For children attending other early years settings, including those cared for by childminders, a link book ensures that vital information is shared. Teachers from the feeder schools are invited to spend time with children due to move on, to get to know a little about them before they start formally. This aids the transitions for children and gives them a sense of pride. They talk about their uniforms and the routines they will follow when they start. At the heart of the nursery's popularity and success is the partnership with parents and carers. The nursery is well-known in the area and several generations of families have used it over a long period of time. They feel loyal and are happy to recommend the nursery to friends and family. This is largely because they feel welcomed and know that staff have a good understanding of their families' particular needs. Initiatives, such as the family fun days, concerts, sports days and open sessions make parents very welcome. They are invited on these social occasions to complete questionnaires or verbally express their views and suggestions to staff.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection.
Met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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	973173
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 8
Total number of places	42
Number of children on roll	78
Name of provider	St Clare's Day Nursery
Date of previous inspection	16/12/2013
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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