

Inspection of St Mary's Day Nursery

Towcester Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN4 8EZ

Inspection date: 5 August 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are happy to attend St Mary's Day Nursery. They stretch up high to reach the intercom button, and wait patiently for staff to wave to them from the window and come to let them in. Children separate from their parents easily, as staff greet them warmly and welcome them into the nursery. Three- and four-year-old children rush into the Butterflies room to find out what they will be doing that day, while two-year-old children toddle off to the Caterpillars room eager to play. Children are quick to settle and show a positive attitude to their play and learning. They behave well and respond positively to the high expectations that staff have of them. Children are encouraged to share, take turns and respect each other's play. For example, staff prompt children to check that their friends have finished creating their patterns with the shaped tiles before they dismantle the pattern and reuse the tiles.

Children have positive relationships with staff. Staff know children very well and understand when individual children may need additional support. For instance, children demonstrate their curiosity as they explore torches and cameras. Staff spend time showing children how to make the torch beam bigger and smaller, and support them to use the digital screen on the back of the camera.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Parents are very complimentary about the nursery. They say that the manager and staff are very supportive and go above and beyond to ensure that their children's needs are met. Parents state that they receive regular updates, along with face-to-face and online information about their children's development.
- The management team has a clear vision for the nursery and staff. They have a good understanding of what they want children to learn. Staff regularly assess children's learning and use this information to plan activities to support them to continue to learn and develop.
- Staff state that they feel supported by the manager. The manager is very proactive in her approach to staff development. She works closely with staff to find out what areas of childcare they are interested in. The manager then supports staff to access further training to develop their knowledge and interest further. Staff consider that their well-being is a high priority for the manager and, as a result, their morale is high.
- Staff plan an engaging curriculum based on children's interests and experiences. Children are keen to find mini-beasts outdoors. Staff provide information books and identification cards to help children identify the different bugs that they collect and study. Children peer through binoculars and learn how to use magnifying glasses.
- Staff sit close by to children as they play and investigate. They introduce new

vocabulary, and support children's understanding of shape and number. Children show a particular interest in numbers. Staff encourage them to join in a search to look for the numbers three and four that are written and displayed around the nursery. Children learn that they can make squares by connecting triangles. They tell staff 'building makes me happy'.

- The nursery has a well-established routine, which children understand. This helps them to know what comes next and to anticipate events in the future, such as going outside to play and lunchtime. Older children know that when they are outside and the church bell rings, it is time for them to pack away. Children demonstrate good independence skills and a positive attitude to tidying away their toys before they move back indoors.
- Children are generally encouraged to manage their own personal care, such as washing hands and blowing noses. They know when they need to rest and settle quickly at sleep time. However, sometimes, staff do things for children that they could do for themselves.
- Staff encourage children to choose what they want to play with and how they want to use it. They provide open-ended resources to encourage children's curiosity. Children experiment with making potions in the mud kitchen. However, staff do not always extend children's thinking beyond what they already know. For example, children show staff a volcano they have made with soil, but staff do not ask them questions to challenge their thinking or extend their understanding of what they have been doing.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers and staff have a very good understanding of safeguarding. Staff follow stringent safety measures to ensure children are kept safe indoors and outside in the garden. Staff complete relevant training to ensure that their knowledge of safeguarding and child protection is up to date. Staff are aware of the signs and indicators when a child may be at risk of harm. They know how to record their concerns and who to report them to. The manager ensures that all required safety checks are completed to ensure staff working with children are suitable to do so.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- further develop children's independence skills by consistently allowing them to carry out tasks for themselves
- strengthen support for children to build on their understanding and further challenge their thinking.

Setting details

Unique reference number	220164
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10138512
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	38
Number of children on roll	58
Name of registered person	St Mary's Day Nursery Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP522003
Telephone number	01604 767923
Date of previous inspection	9 December 2014

Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Day Nursery was established in 1981. It operates from rooms within St. Mary's Church buildings in Far Cotton, close to Northampton town centre. The nursery employs 12 members of childcare staff. Of these, 11 hold appropriate early years qualifications between levels 2 and 5. The nursery opens from Monday to Friday, 8am until 5.30pm, all year round, except for bank holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year. The nursery provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Karen Siddons

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the setting received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the nursery managers and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the nursery.
- The inspector observed the quality of education during activities indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact this has on children's learning.
- The inspector completed a joint observation of an activity with the deputy manager.
- The deputy manager and inspector completed a learning walk together so the inspector could find out about the deputy manager's intent for the nursery curriculum.
- The inspector held a meeting with the nursery managers. They looked at relevant documentation and checked evidence of the suitability of staff working in the nursery.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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