



St. Nicholas Early Years Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY309870
Inspection date	24 April 2006
Inspector	Jenny Kane
Setting Address	St. Nicholas C of E (Controlled) Primary School, Fairfield Road, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8BP
Telephone number	01797 361906
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Registered person	St. Nicholas Early Years and Childcare
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Nicholas Early Years Centre has been registered since September 2005. The centre operates from St Nicholas Primary School in New Romney and is currently open from Monday to Friday during term time.

The pre-school nursery runs from a mobile classroom in the grounds of the school. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time and is open from 08:50 to 14:50.

The out-of school facility runs from a classroom and the school hall. A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time and is open for breakfast from 07:50 to 08:50 and after school from 14:50 to 18:00.

Both groups have access to several secure outside play areas. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group serves the local area and surrounding area.

There are currently 49 children on roll, of whom 26 receive funding. The group supports children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are 7 staff working with the children. The majority hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications.

The group receives support from the Local Authority, The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) and teaching staff of the school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in clean and welcoming premises. The group maintains accident and medication records and has first aid resources ready to hand. Most staff hold current first aid certificates. Sick children do not attend which prevents the spread of infection. The staff actively promote the health of the children by maintaining good standards of hygiene and cleanliness. They share cleaning tasks and are aware of preventing cross-infection. For example, by washing hands before preparing food and cleaning tables with disinfectant spray. Children understand about washing their hands and are independent when using the bathroom, ask for help when needed and are developing self-care skills.

Drinks are readily available and children help themselves from the water dispenser in the playroom. However, all activities stop for snack time, which stops the flow in routine. The children benefit from the provision of nutritious meals and snacks, cooked on the premises daily using fresh ingredients. Children enjoy shopping trips to buy food from the local shops. They know that the fruit they have just bought is good for them. Children take part in a healthy eating project, which helps them to develop good eating habits. The staff sit and eat with the children, they discuss what food they are eating and where it comes from. This enhances their enjoyment of mealtimes. The staff gather all relevant information regarding allergies and medical history and record food intake in the meal diary, which keeps parents informed and ensures they meet children's individual dietary needs.

Children rest and relax in the book corner if they are tired. Younger children, who stay for an extended day and who need to sleep, do so on a low bed in this area. However, this gives little privacy. During activities, staff are aware of meeting the

needs of the children aged under 3 years. Key workers support individual children helping them to join in activities, and to feel secure.

There are very good opportunities for physical play. Children use the garden as much as possible and in wet weather use the undercover area nearby. Staff plan the outdoor play well and offer a very good range of resources which makes playing outside a favourite activity. Children particularly enjoy the freedom of choosing what they do and enjoy digging in the soil with spades, buckets and trucks. They dig holes and move earth about sharing and cooperating with each other. Children negotiate well when riding bikes and trucks, manoeuvring round obstacles and showing good awareness of the whereabouts of other children. They push about shopping trolleys, collecting items and engaging in role-play. After-school club children make full use of the playground area, the climbing frame and the grassed area. They move about confidently riding bikes, playing with footballs and taking notice of where other children are. They also enjoy sitting and chatting in the playground and sandpit area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a secure and well-maintained environment. There is a reasonable amount of space indoors for activities and staff put a lot of thought into the planning of the room to ensure they make effective use of the space. The group has a nominated member of staff responsible for health and safety. A daily risk assessment of all areas means that the children are able to move about and use the space freely and safely. Security is good, emergency procedures are in place and parents gain access via ringing the doorbell.

To help promote safety, the staff members supervise the children at all times both inside and outdoors. A very good range of toys and play equipment is available for children's play, which are stimulating and suitable for their age and stage of development. The children have easy access to the toys, which are on shelves and in boxes around the playing area. The children; therefore, select what they play with and make choices for themselves. They show respect for the toys, readily help to clear away and some children sweep up spilled sand with a brush on their own instigation.

Children enjoy regular trips around the school grounds and outings in the community in the turtle bus, a six-seated push along vehicle. Very good procedures are in place, to ensure children's safety. Staff carry a mobile phone, small first aid kit and relevant documents regarding the children in their care. Staff test-drive the vehicle, risk assess venues and areas to make sure that all places visited are accessible to children.

The manager has a very good awareness of her responsibilities in relation to child protection issues. She has recently attended training in the subject and shares her knowledge with staff. There are clear written procedures in place, which the group shares with the parents. The management committee ensures that procedures are up to date and that staff attend appropriate training. This safeguards and promotes the children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a very good variety of interesting activities, which fully support their developing needs. The routine is clear and well planned around the ages of the children attending and their capabilities. However, stopping for snack and getting ready to play outside interrupts the flow of activities. All children, both in the nursery and the out-of-school club, partake of these activities in a large group and this sometimes limits choice.

Good support from the staff members and high ratios ensure that all children receive a lot of individual attention. Staff have a good rapport with the children, give help and reassurance when needed and join in with play. They speak to children in quiet voices and encourage a calm atmosphere. As a result, all children are happy, outgoing and confident. At the end of each activity time, a wind chime indicates that it is time to clear away. Children respond readily to this request but they have very little warning that the activity is about to finish.

Staff have a sound understanding of child development. The deputy has recently attended training in the Birth to three matters framework and is enthusiastic about sharing her knowledge. She has started to introduce this into the planning of daily activities and the assessment system. This ensures that the group continues to meet the developmental needs of the younger children and promotes their care and learning.

Attractive presentation encourages children to make full use of the resources. Children move about their environment making choices about what they play with. They enjoy using the light box where they make patterns in fine sand, look at shapes and colours and watch what happens to snow when it melts. The home corner is well used and during the inspection, it was a hospital. Children wear uniforms, pretend to write prescriptions and enjoy 'operating' on a member of staff. They partake in a craft activity during each session, using a variety of materials and tools. Children talk about sheep and discuss what they are like by looking at photographs, models and pictures. There is a strong emphasis on children developing their own self-expression and they produce individual artwork.

Children show excitement and enthusiasm during play. They respond well to ideas and suggestions for extending the activity. Children laugh a lot during activities and relate well to each other. They work together learning important social skills, such as sharing and cooperating. For example, during play in the garden two children try to use a three seat rocker. They get another child to join in and realise that with cooperation it will balance and rock.

The out-of-school club children use their areas well and are encouraged to think for themselves. Children partake in a craft activity using wax and acrylic paint. Staff explain the technique and the children join in eagerly. They all make individual designs and compare with others for different ideas.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning. Children achieve well because staff are skilled and use their thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide good quality education. Staff have a clear understanding of what children can realistically achieve and encourage and challenge them appropriately through a variety of interesting and stimulating activities.

The plans are comprehensive. They show learning objectives, how to extend activity, resources needed and links clearly with the stepping stones. Staff observe children during activities and use their notes to assess their achievements and progress. They use these assessments and evaluations to plan for each individual child.

Children are developing good relationships with adults and peers. They work as part of a group taking turns and sharing fairly. Children speak confidently and initiate conversations between one another. They show good levels of independence, for example, by taking themselves to the toilet, getting their coats from their peg, putting on wellington boots, selecting play materials and helping to clear up after activities.

Language and communication skills are effectively encouraged by staff who extend children's learning through practical activities. Children enjoy listening to stories within groups and individually. They respond well when the member of staff reads with enthusiasm and are able to link the story about insects to caterpillars and beetles, which they find in the garden. Children learn to recognise familiar words such as their own names. Labelled areas and toys and good visual displays help children's literacy.

Children use mathematics during play and daily routines. For example, they count how many are staying for lunch, how many children are present, and can confidently count up to 10 or more. They recognise number, shape, size, position and quantity through practical activities and games such as measuring and pouring, sorting shapes, puzzles, blocks, gears and rotas. Children examine objects and living things to find out more about them. They use magnifying glasses to discover the shapes and size of insects.

There are good opportunities for children to explore texture, colour and feel during sand and water play, painting and play dough activities and digging and mixing mud in the garden. Children respond enthusiastically to songs and action rhymes. They enjoy taking an object from a bag and thinking of a song related to it. For example, one child picks a cotton reel and children sing 'wind the bobbin up'. Children's imagination is developing well as they act out their experiences during role-play indoors and out. In the garden, a group of children play with a tea set, pretending to serve each other. One child spontaneously starts to sing 'I'm a little teapot' and soon several other children join in eagerly.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are relaxed and settled. The group treats and respects children as individuals, with their own particular needs. This helps children to feel secure and

develop a positive self-image. Younger children are well supported and therefore beginning to learn about their own capabilities, to make choices and to express personal preferences. Staff speak to parents regularly and discuss the children's backgrounds, to ensure they meet any specific requirements.

Staff are experienced, qualified and committed to a policy of inclusion. Children have key workers who offer support and use assessment records to ensure each child receives appropriate care. The deputy takes responsibility for the role of special needs coordinator. She has very good knowledge and understanding of issues. The manager has undertaken training in special needs and shares information with staff. This helps the group to be confident in their ability to provide care for children with a range of abilities. However, the premises have limited access for children with a mobility problem or disability.

Children have access to a good range of play materials, which reflect diversity and positive images. They gain an understanding of the wider world through a variety of multi-cultural projects and celebration of festivals. For example, children look at maps, flags and translate their names into other languages. Staff encourage parental involvement through sharing knowledge and practical help. Information technology is available and the computer is set up so that children access easily. They use Information Technology on their own, or in small groups, with help from staff when required. Children develop a keen interest in the world around them through outings in the local community. They visit the garden centre to buy seeds, the shops for food for lunch, the library for different books and the Age Concern centre to meet older people in society. The nursery fosters the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Appropriate behaviour management strategies work well in practice and are effective. Children in the nursery receive lots of praise and encouragement and this helps them to feel secure and confident. Because staff keep children well occupied, engaged and stimulated, the children's behaviour is very good. The out-of-school club children benefit from clear boundaries and a list of 'golden rules' that they have helped set. Staff deal with incidents in a friendly yet assertive way, encouraging children to negotiate and work together. As a result, older children's behaviour is generally good. Staff share the behaviour management policy with parents and give regular verbal feedback regarding incidents of unwanted behaviour to ensure continuity of care.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The staff members have formed relationships with the parents, which are friendly and professional. They welcome parents warmly, sharing information about children's care and progress through daily chats, newsletters and the notice board. The parents are happy with the service provided and like the information recorded in the food diary. The children benefit from this positive partnership between staff and parents, which promotes continuity of care.

All parents receive good quality, well-produced information about the provision's care and education. Children's records are thorough and link to the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. Staff have very good knowledge and understanding of both these areas. Key workers update and maintain the children's folders regularly. Information kept is relevant, used to adapt activities and helps to

promote children's care and learning. Many parents ask to look at their child's assessment folders and records. However, some do not, and this means that parents do not all receive the same access to information. Staff are keen to share their knowledge with parents and are looking at ways to involve them further in the sharing of written information.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from high staff ratios and staff who work as a team. The staff members work together to plan the layout of the environment, both indoors and out, to ensure that the children are safe and secure. A good mix of activities indoors, in the garden and regular outings helps the group meet the developing needs of all the children. When staff plan activities they take into account the younger children and their needs so that they receive plenty of individual attention. Staff are looking at ways to enhance the routine so that activities are not interrupted and flow more smoothly.

The older children have their own area in the school, where they relax and play. They are beginning to be involved in planning of their own activities. The children receive good adult support, which helps them feel secure and confident and a flexible approach allows them to make choices and pursue their own activities and games.

All mandatory records and documents are in place, kept confidentially and are readily available to parents. Written policies and procedures are of a good standard and clearly state and reflect the service offered.

Leadership and management are good. The committee is fully involved in the running of the group and takes responsibility for regularly reviewing and updating the policies. The head teacher takes an active role in managing the staff and liaises well with the manager. The staff are well supported by the manager who works alongside her staff, leading by example. The deputy offers good backup and this contributes to good teamwork.

The manager recognises the importance of monitoring and evaluating the curriculum to promote the children's care and learning. The group takes into account parent's opinions and views and staff are looking at ways to improve written communication.

The group demonstrates good commitment to continued improvement through participation in training, team meetings and self-development. The staff are forward thinking, enthusiastic and open to new ideas and ways of working. They are able to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, both individually and as a team. Staff's professional approach helps children feel secure and provides continuity of care. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop the routine with particular regard to snack time, the flow and finishing of activities (applies to both care and education)
- consider developing the use of contact books to keep parents informed of children's care and achievements

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- consider ways to involve parents in the Foundation Stage records so that all parents can support children's learning at home

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk