

# St Nicholas School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY338479
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
<b>Setting Address</b>	St. Nicholas C of E Primary School, Six Hills Way, STEVENAGE, Hertfordshire, SG2 0PZ
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<b>Registered person</b>	North Herts Council For Voluntary Services
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Childcare
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lonsdale School Play scheme registered in September 2006 and is located in St. Nicholas School, Stevenage. It was previously registered at another address since 2003. The group is situated in the main hall and a classroom, they have access to medical and changing facilities. Children have access to secure outside play areas.

A maximum of 12 children aged from 5 to under 8 years may attend the club at any one time. The scheme offers sessions during Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays and operates from 10:00 to 15:00.

There are currently 30 children on roll. Children above the registration age range also attend. The scheme supports children from Stevenage and the surrounding areas. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and supports children who speak English as an additional language. Lonsdale Play scheme employs 12 staff and meets the requirement for 50% of the staff to hold early years qualifications. All staff have additional experience within this area of work.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn the importance of personal hygiene because they follow well-planned daily routines which they adopt with the close support of staff. They are beginning to achieve independence as they are encouraged to take part in routines which support their health. For example, cleaning tables before and after meals, fetching jugs of drinks and clearing un-eaten foods into disposal bins. Good procedures, such as staff wearing protective clothing and clear risk assessments to maintain hygiene levels, help prevent the spread of infection.

Children's immediate medical needs are very well met by staff as they follow clear and rigorous procedures for administering and recording medication. Any accidents or incidents are fully documented and shared with parents to ensure children's welfare is promoted. Children receive appropriate nourishment through the provision of packed lunches provided by their parents and carers which meet their individual dietary needs. Advice is given to parents and carers, within the registration packs, about suitable and nourishing contents advisable for packed lunches. Children have regular access to drinks which they access independently wherever possible. Staff are very aware of offering regular fluids to those children requiring additional help. Children and staff sit together for snacks and meals, and enjoy varied discussions and songs together, which fosters their social skills.

Children's physical health and development is well promoted because of numerous opportunities provided by the staff, and routines which support their free choice of varied physical activities. These include exploring the adventure trail outdoors, as well as the woods set within the fully enclosed grounds where they can explore nature and wildlife at close hand. Children enjoy visits from a sports specialist where they experiment with a parachute as well as playing racquet games.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's safety is consistently promoted in this well organised setting. Children have free access to the large hall where they can explore physical play such as the bouncy castle, hula hoops, and basketball safely. They move freely between the rooms for play and the outdoor area where they are shadowed by nominated staff ensuring effective supervision. This means they may develop independence within a safe environment. Children use safe and suitable equipment offering them an environment in which they may safely explore and reach their full potential. Staff use 'walkie-talkie' systems to maintain contact in all areas which ensures prompt action in the event of accidents to children.

Clear procedures for signing children in and out of the scheme are in operation, as are procedures for visitors to sign in, which means that access to and from the provision is monitored. Written health and safety procedures, together with thorough risk assessments, are effectively implemented. This ensures children's well-being and safety. However, there were hazards identified on the day which present a risk to children and which must be addressed to maintain children's safety.

Children's welfare is extremely well promoted and they are fully protected because staff understand child protection issues and the appropriate steps to follow. This is because staff

dedicate time to updating their understanding by reviewing policies and procedures. They make sure that they have full knowledge of each child attending each day by checking the attending registration log daily. This means they are aware of possible or ongoing issues for the children. Staff attend training courses prior to all play schemes arranged by the organisers which further updates their working knowledge.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are enthusiastic and enjoy their time at the setting which enables them to make positive relationships and respond to new challenges. The play scheme aims to provide care and leisure activities for children during the school holidays within a safe environment. Children know the staff who care for them and make firm relationships, this means they feel safe and confident thereby maximising their enjoyment at the play scheme. They enjoy visitors to the setting including children's entertainers who do magic tricks, clowning and balloon sculptures. Also popular are 'Paradise Park' visits which gives them the opportunity to be close to varied animals such as ferrets, rabbits and rats. Children enjoy the tactile experiences and the visits are used for them to ask questions, as well as to learn about care for living beings and hygiene when handling animals.

Children have favourite activities which staff are aware of as they return to work with the play scheme each holiday. This means that staff can plan and support children by playing alongside them offering ideas, using new language, and praising children. This leads to them trying new ideas and developing their play further. Children particularly enjoy the freedom they have to explore outdoors where it is safe and fully enclosed. Staff offer meaningful prompts whilst they play, such as pointing out the birds, urging children to listen to the sounds around them and leading them to explore textures of natural materials. Children are stimulated and try out new skills as they run, feel the materials around them, 'swish' the small branches, and balance within the adventure trail.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's specific and identified individual needs take high priority in this well-managed and organised play scheme. An emphasis is placed on ensuring that children's needs are assessed through detailed registration forms, which are supported with daily information sharing with staff. Thorough policies and information ensure that parents and carers play a full part in the care of the children. However, there is no clear procedure should children be collected by persons other than the parent or carer who brought the child to the scheme, and this compromises children's safety.

Individual development and behaviour plans are in place for many, which are respected and maintained, ensuring that children have stability in the setting. Staff are skilled at using signing and non-verbal methods of communication with children to support communication and choice. Children understand responsible behaviour because staff maintain consistent boundaries and demonstrate extremely good role models for behaviour. Children are treated with respect and courtesy, listened to at all times, and given as much choice as possible over activities within the day. Children show that they have developed firm relationships with each other as they greet each other on arrival, enjoy talking and singing together, and point out to staff when

younger children need help. They have formed close friendships with children, both from their own schools as well as from other schools, during the play scheme.

Children feel a strong sense of belonging at this play scheme and make an evaluation at the end of the holiday to feedback what they have enjoyed doing. They are listened to and this increases their sense of control over their environment. Staff continue to develop that sense of ownership as they are introducing further review by using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to give children choices, in line with that used in their schools.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's safety and welfare is extremely well promoted through the organisation of all areas of work. The North Hertfordshire Council for Voluntary Services, who organise the play scheme, regularly visit the setting and directly oversee its operation. A great deal of planning is done, in cooperation with the managers and deputies, prior to commencement of the play scheme each holiday. This includes reviewing policies and arranging training for staff as required, to ensure that the standard is maintained. A thorough induction of new staff, which includes supervision at Saturday clubs where they volunteer initially, takes place. This process ensures that staff are suitable to work within the setting and gives managers the opportunity to ascertain to which area of work they are best suited. Ultimately, the care for children benefits from well-trained and experienced staff.

All staff review the extensive procedures and policies which cover all areas, signing to confirm their understanding, showing a commitment to reviewing their practice. Activities and visitors are arranged to stimulate and offer new experiences to children to support the regular on-site activities. Comprehensive documentation which is easily accessible and maintained ensures that staff may act quickly in any emergency to protect children. Staff deployment is designed to ensure that children have suitable support to give them the best opportunities to participate in activities and spend their time engaged in meaningful occupation. Arrangements are made to give staff regular breaks enabling them to remain committed and focussed throughout the day. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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.

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

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.

### 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):

- assess the risks to children in relation to unprotected sockets, spilt sand on the pavement and equipment used by workmen on the premises and take action to minimise these
- review the arrangements made with parents for the arrival and departure of children from the provision, including making sure that children are collected by the right person.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)