

St Aidans Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127571
Inspection date	23 July 2007
Inspector	Beryl Witheridge
Setting Address	The Vicarage, St. Gregorys Crescent, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4JL
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Registered person	St Aidans Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Aidans Nursery opened in 1979 and operates from one room in a church hall. It is situated in the town of Gravesend, Kent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open for three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 08.55 to 11.50, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 24 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a local catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. Of these four staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff working towards a higher qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about good health issues. They are independent and take themselves to the toilet and know to wash their hands afterwards, staff support them with appropriate language. At snack time they use wet wipes to clean their hands before touching the food. Staff use disposable gloves when handling the food for the children's snacks. Tables are wiped with antibacterial sprays to ensure that surfaces are clean. Children with contagious illnesses do not attend the pre-school which helps prevent cross infection. The written policies and the accident and medication records help to promote the children's health needs. Children enjoy lots of opportunities to be active both indoors and outside.

Children are provided with healthy choices at snack time; they have options of different fruits. They are introduced to foods from different countries. They grow cress and use it to make their own sandwiches, they are also growing strawberries. Drinks are readily available for them throughout the session; the children have a choice of water, milk or squash, or they can bring their own drink from home. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are met. A list of any specific dietary requirements are kept so that all staff are aware of individual needs.

Children's physical development is encouraged through activities which include music and movement, hoops, quoits, bean bags, caterpillar, bikes, traffic lights and balancing. Children begin to understand the effects exercise has on their bodies as they run around while doing action nursery rhymes and get out of breath. Fine motor development is good because children have many opportunities to use appropriate equipment and tools such as pens, pencils, scissors, construction and puzzles.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to learn and play in warm, comfortable surroundings where they can move around freely, extend their play and use their imaginations. The children are able to move easily from activity to activity. Their work is proudly displayed on the walls. The children are cared for in one large room in a church hall. The premises are safe and secure, and children are not able to leave the premises unaccompanied. There are procedures in place, should someone other than the parent/carer be collecting the children, to ensure that the children are safe. Children are supervised closely at all times. When playing outside the staff check for hazards and mark off a secure area for the children to play in. Toys and equipment are checked regularly and staff do a large clean up at the end of term. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers help to provide safe surroundings. A written risk assessment of the premises is carried out; there is also a complete written assessment from the church hall committee.

Children's safety is promoted through the emergency evacuation procedures which are practised every half term and are recorded in the register. Children's welfare is fully considered through the Safeguarding Children procedures which are in place; two members of staff have recently attended Safeguarding Children training and have shared this information with the rest of the staff. Staff are aware of their own vulnerability and the procedures to be followed in the event of an accusation and are included in the written policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children come happily into the group and settle eagerly to the activities set out for them. Children play well together; they help and support each other, take turns and negotiate their roles when taking part in imaginative play. They get on well together and have fun; they show interest in the activities available. Staff sit with the children and talk to them about what they are doing, asking open ended questions. Children do not have free access to all of the resources because the equipment has to be put out and cleared away at the beginning and end of each session but staff will change an activity if it is not working or if the children ask for something else. Toys and resources include the home corner, dressing up, Little Ponies, Hop Scotch with quoits and bean bags. There is a table for writing skills, paper, pencils and crayons; children have access to a toolkit and workbench, cars and garages, threading, construction to make a road for their cars, a book area, dolls, pushchairs, and board games with support from a member of staff. Children show a high level of wellbeing and involvement; they enjoy being together and have a good relationship with staff and each other. The children are regularly praised and encouraged which helps to develop their self esteem and boost their confidence.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and an understanding of how children learn. Children are progressing in relation to their individual starting points; parents and keyworker staff work together to form the initial assessment and identify these starting points. Staff use the Foundation Stage curriculum, the early learning goals and the stepping stones when they are planning the activities; they also use differentiation and the Birth to three matters framework for the younger children. All staff are involved in the termly planning at a development day and use the identified next steps for their keyworker children to inform that planning. However, it is not always clearly documented within the planning who particular activities are aimed at and what their targets are. Activities are verbally evaluated and some evaluations are recorded; these evaluations are used to help with future planning. Assessment is well used to help move the children forward. Their records give a clear picture of progress. Parents are able to look at their children's records at any time. A consultation is carried out with parents once a year, asking them if they are happy with their child's progress and if the group can do anything else to help meet their child's needs.

Children are interested in the range of activities and experiences provided for them, which cover the six areas of learning. They reflect the community the children come from and the wider world around them.

Children are happy and eager to take part in what is on offer for them to play with. They show high levels of wellbeing and involvement because they have positive attitudes to learning and show this through asking questions, showing a pride in their work, concentrating for periods of time and working together. They talk openly to the staff and their peers. Children understand between right and wrong and consider the consequences of their actions on others; they are willing to share and show an open kindness to each other. They sometimes find it hard to sit and listen when in a large group. Children are learning to become independent; they manage their own personal hygiene and are very good at dressing themselves with the dressing up clothes. Some children can write their own names but staff tend to write the children's names on their work without allowing them to attempt this for themselves. Children show an appreciation of books and stories which are freely accessible; they share books with each other

and listen intently when a member of staff reads them a story. Some children can recognise simple familiar words such as their names and the names of others. Recognition of the written word is extended through environmental print such as 'shapes and colours, door and the home corner'. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations; they count the number of children present and discuss whether there are more or less boys than girls. Children show that they understand size and shape through practical activities such as sand play and construction. The children are able to recognise the shapes square, circle and triangle easily. This is complimented by the wall displays representing these shapes.

Children learn about living things through activities such as planting and growing cress or strawberries. Children investigate using their senses; they have had the opportunity to taste different foods from around the world. Children learn about the concept of communication by playing with mobile phones, role play tills and computer keyboards. Children show an interest regarding the world around them; one child relays the exploits of his grandparents who had their electricity blown out by the thunder storms and that he had seen rain that was 'frozen and came down in lumps', staff tell the children this is called 'hail stones'. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They use a selection of tools when playing with the play-dough. They use pens, pencils and scissors competently. Children demonstrate a good awareness of space and move confidently, imaginatively and safely during physical activities such as singing action rhymes. They move around the room carefully without bumping into each other. They enjoy balancing on the stepping stones and the balancing bars. Children enjoy participating in singing sessions and regularly explore sound and musical instruments; for instance they use drums and tambourines to sing songs such as 'The Grand old Duke of York' while marching around the room, singing and playing enthusiastically.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are openly welcomed into the group and staff are aware of treating them according to their individual needs. Staff talk to the parents to learn about the children's backgrounds, their culture or any specific needs there may be. Toys and resources provide children with some positive images of diversity. Children learn about different festivals and celebrations throughout the year. They have looked at Chinese New Year, Christmas and Divali. They also learn about the church festivals and receive visits from the vicar and the curate to talk about these such as Harvest Festival. Children are able to learn about their similarities and differences and are able to discover the wider world. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported with staff undertaking training to help provide the required level of care. They receive support from the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and regularly use 'Natterbox' which is aimed at helping children with speech problems. Staff work closely with the parents to ensure they are meeting the children's needs.

There are high expectations of the children's behaviour and they live up to these. The behavioural boundaries are discussed with the children and are implemented by the staff at all times. The children are willing to help each other and think of each other's feelings. Staff are excellent role models; they discuss any unacceptable behaviour with children and manage their behaviour in a quiet, firm and consistent manner. Children are regularly praised which helps to promote their confidence and self esteem. Parents and staff have a good relationship which means that the children benefit from consistency of care. Parents feel that they can talk to the staff at any time with any concerns they may have. Parents are kept well informed about the group through termly newsletters.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive quality information about the curriculum in the prospectus and at the yearly meetings they are invited to. They are well informed about their child's progress and achievements. They are fully involved in helping to set the targets for their children. They have regular access to their children's progress records and are able to input their own thoughts and ideas. Parents can ask to see their child's records at any time as well as having formal meetings with the keyworker for their child. Parents feel that their children are making progress and are developing well since starting at the pre-school. Parents share their skills with the children to help with their progress; a parent visits once a month to play the piano with the children and another ex parent, who is a lollipop lady, visits to talk to the children about road safety.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are confident, comfortable and secure with the staff and each other. The manager and committee ensure that the staff caring for the children are suitably qualified to do so. There are five staff employed in the pre-school and most of them hold an early years qualification and are involved in ongoing training. All staff are first aid trained and every member of staff has a current Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. The recruitment procedures for employing new staff are rigorous, although there is a very minimal turnover of staff. The staff continually risk assess the premises and children are fully supervised at all times. Staff know the policies and procedures for the group and these are well implemented at all times which benefits the children's wellbeing. Staff meet daily to address the session and to ensure that any needs and concerns for the children are being met. The required documentation and records are in place, including daily attendance records, which show clear arrival and departure times for children. The registration certificate is clearly displayed and the necessary records are all stored confidentially and are readily available for inspection.

Leadership and management are good. Children are well cared for; management ensure that the needs of the children come first and that the planning and education follows those needs. The overall success of the curriculum is evaluated through monitoring, observations and checking children's records to ensure they are progressing well. Daily meetings and staff meetings are carried out and all staff are included in the planning; this provides them with first hand knowledge of the curriculum and what the expected outcomes for the children are. Staff evaluate activities to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are being delivered but this evaluation is often verbal and not written. New staff have a written and verbal induction; this is followed by observations and appraisals which identifies and provides any necessary training or resources which may be required. Staff are motivated through daily talks, staff meetings, yearly appraisals and self evaluation. This is supported by outside agencies such as the Early Years advisory teacher who helps to provide further training. Staff share any information gained on training so that all staff benefit. Committee meetings are held three times a year to monitor the progress of the group. These are done in conjunction with their sister group The Christopher Centre.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to ensure that all documentation is reviewed and updated as appropriate. Policies are reviewed once a year but the updates are not always

accurate, therefore, this remains as a recommendation. They were also asked to provide parents with a complaints policy. This is now in place and a complaints log is available to share with parents should there be a complaint. They were asked to ensure that parents sign to acknowledge any medicines given to the children. This is now in place and any records are kept on the children's personal files. The register was required to be accurate at all times. Staff now complete the register at the beginning of the session, they record arrival and departure times and staff attendances are recorded in the daily diary.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- extend the resources which provide positive images of the diversity of society for the children
- ensure all documentation is reviewed and updated accurately, as appropriate

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):

- encourage the children to be independent and write their own names on their work
- ensure that the children's needs are clearly identified in the future planning

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