

# St Mary's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	301777
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Julie Morrison
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Mary's Roman Catholic First School, Hencotes, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 2EE
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Mary's Nursery (Hexham ) Ltd.
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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 Mary's Nursery is a privately owned non-profit making childcare provider which registered in 2000. It is situated in the grounds of St Mary's Roman Catholic First School in Hexham, Northumberland and serves the local community. The nursery occupies a two story building. It is registered for 49 children under the age of eight. There are currently 177 children on roll aged from birth to 14 years of age; of these, 21 are in receipt of funding. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The nursery is open Monday to Friday 07.30 until 18.00 and Saturdays 08.30 to 17.30 for 51 weeks of the year. The pre-school funded sessions run term-time only each week day from 09.00 until 11.30 and 12.30 until 15.00.

The setting employs 16 staff of which 13 hold an appropriate qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted as good standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained throughout the nursery. For example, tables are cleaned before and after food is served and each member of staff has responsibility for specific areas. Staff follow good nappy changing procedures to reduce the risk of cross-infection, such as wearing gloves, aprons and disposing of nappies appropriately. Consistent adult support and guidance helps children to become increasingly independent in their personal care, for example, staff lead by example showing young children how to wash their hands after using the toilet. Older children confidently use the toilet themselves and are beginning to make the connection between good health and hygiene. For example, they wash their hands before snack and explain, that they do this to 'stop germs'. A clear written sick child policy and the effective recording of emergency consents and accidents, further promotes children's good health and well-being. Medication is clearly recorded, however, the procedure does not support confidentiality.

All children have good opportunities for physical exercise which contributes to their good health. They benefit from several outdoor play areas, where they ride bikes, play on ride on cars and make dens. The staff interact well outdoors with the children, playing ball games and making impromptu stepping stones improving children's balance and gross motor skills. Indoors, they join in with action rhymes and creative movement sessions. Babies are able to crawl, move around and explore their environment. They benefit from regular sessions outside and going for walks to the park.

Children at the nursery and out of school club enjoy a variety of healthy snacks and meals, including lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. Well balanced and nutritious meals are provided by the cook, using local produce and menu's are displayed for parents to see. Staff work closely with parents and the cook to ensure that all dietary needs are met.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where risks are identified and minimised through written risk assessments and visual observations. Check lists ensure that all areas are checked at the end of the day and staff ensure that any identified risks have appropriate action taken, for example, ensuring the entrance remains safe and clear upon arrival. The premises are secure, doors and gates are locked at all times, however, visitors are not consistently signed into the setting which does not promote children's safety. The rooms are well laid out to ensure that children are able to move around independently and can freely to explore their environment. Child sized storage boxes and shelves mean that resources are accessible and allow children to make independent choices from a wide range of good quality and developmentally appropriate resources.

Children are well protected because the setting has a good range of written policies in place covering safety issues, which are understood and implemented by the staff. For example, lost and uncollected children, checking sleeping babies regularly and carrying out regular fire drills. Children are kept safe on outings through effective procedures, for example, written consents are in place and staff carry first aid kits and emergency contact numbers with them. Young children are securely strapped into pushchairs, while older children wear wrist straps. Children

have good opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, as the setting organises regular visits from the fire brigade and they plan activities for the children to discuss safety scenarios, for example, where is it safe to play and what to do if they find tablets.

Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection, which effectively safeguards children. They have a clear written child protection policy in place and a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse. Staff are aware of procedures to follow should they have any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the nursery. They benefit from flexible routines which allow them to eagerly participate in a wide range of child-centred and adult-led activities which promote all areas of learning. They show an awareness of colours and shapes as they play with finger paints and enjoy sorting puzzles and jigsaws. Children use their imaginations well as they pretend to be at the vets and each take their own role in conducting an 'operation', 'we need an apron on to operate to get the sock out of his tummy' they enthusiastically explain. Good use of questioning by staff further develops learning, for example, they ask, 'is his heart beating fast or slow?' The staff encourage children to refer to vet books so they are able to see photographs of what the vets do and put this into practice with their imaginary play.

Children enjoy exploring a wide of natural resources, for example babies enjoy feathers, sponges and silky material to develop their senses. All children enjoy getting messy as they explore the smells, sight and texture of beans and spaghetti. Weekly plans are in place for the out of school club where children enjoy a wide range of activities. For example, they play outside and enjoy board games and creative activities. Staff have procedures in place so that they are able to have quiet time to do their homework if they choose, ensuring individual needs are met.

Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and implement this well with the younger children. Long and short term plans are in place linked to the framework and show how activities are adapted for different ages and abilities. Observations are recorded in individual children's files, which also include photographic evidence and examples of the children's work. Files are taken home at the end of each topic so that parents are able to see their child's development and comment as appropriate.

### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and clear and effective plans are in place covering all areas of learning and showing differentiation for children's abilities. Children's achievements are well recorded in individual files and identify next steps. Staff make good use of questioning to extend children's learning, for example, they ask, 'how does it feel?', 'is it hard or soft?' as children explore different textures. Children eagerly participate in nursery rhymes which help them to develop simple counting skills such as 'five currant buns' and they are beginning to use mathematical language as they explain, this one is bigger. Staff use profiles to record children's progress towards the early learning goals and to identify areas for further development. As a result of this, continuing to use everyday activities to ensure that children's mathematical skills continue to develop appropriately has been identified as an area for development.

Children's communication skills are developing well at nursery. They show good speaking and listening skills, for example, asking questions and talking about what they are doing. They show an interest in books, listening attentively to stories and consulting reference books in the role play area. The children play together and co-operate well with each other showing care and concern for one another.

Children's ability to manipulate small tools is well developed, they successfully use brushes, glue sticks and hold pencils correctly to paint, colour and make glitter pictures. The walls show a wide range of colourful displays of work created by the children. Confidence in technology is developing as the children skilfully use a mouse to complete simple matching games on the computer. Opportunities for children to develop knowledge and understanding of the world are successfully incorporated into planning. Visitors from zoo lab come to the nursery and provide children with the opportunity to hold and learn about insects and reptiles. Staff further develop this learning by collecting bugs from the garden for children to look at with magnifying glasses.

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

The provision is good.

Staff show a clear commitment to equal opportunities and this is evident through practice at the nursery, ensuring that all children have equal access to resources and activities. Children have good opportunities to learn about their local community and culture through a variety of planned activities, such as walks to the local park and around the town and celebrating well known festivals such as Christmas and Easter. A wide range of resources and activities such as, celebrating the Chinese New Year and Diwali encourage children's understanding of diversity. Staff are continually devising fun and interesting ways for children to learn about the wider world, for example, they use 'Jack the dog'. Children take Jack and his suitcase, with reference books and a globe, home and complete a book about the places Jack likes to visit. For example, what the religion is, how people dress and what they eat.

The setting benefits from a Special Educational Needs Coordinator who demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and is committed to working with parents and other organisations to ensure that individual needs are met. All children are beginning to learn Makaton which the staff use at story and circle times to ensure that all children are equally included.

Children behave well in the setting and benefit from positive relationships with staff who know them well. Staff interact calmly and positively with the children, who confidently go to them for cuddles, support and for reassurance. Good behaviour is reinforced through praise and positive, age appropriate behaviour management methods. Colourful displays of the children's work and photographs contribute to a sense of belonging for the children, who know routines well and happily join in at 'tidy up time'. As a result, children are happy and settled at the setting. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is good. Detailed information packs and the prospectus are given to parents before their child starts nursery. These include relevant policies and procedures and information relevant to the specific care, for example, Foundation Stage and out of school club. Parents are invited to an open day and new children attend for short settling in sessions to become familiar with the routines. Staff gather relevant information from parents to ensure that they are able to meet children's individual needs, for example, all about me books. Regular newsletters and notice boards keep parents informed about general nursery activity and written

information is provided for parents of babies on a daily basis. Staff operate an open door policy which ensures that parents are able to talk to staff at any time. This along with regular parents evenings and access to the children's files ensures that parents are aware of children's development and progression towards the early learning goals. Parents receive written information about the topics which ensures that they are able to further develop learning at home if they wish. Consultation forms are used to ensure that staff and parents work together to promote children's learning and development.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well organised setting where they are safe and secure. Toys and resources are effectively organised, enabling children to access them independently and make choices about their learning and play. The space is well laid out to enable children to move around safely and freely. However, the comfort of the reading corner area does not encourage children to make independent use of it for reading and as a quiet area. A good balance of adult and child-led activities helps to develop children's confidence and self-esteem.

Staff are committed to attending relevant training to enhance their personal development and the care of the children. For example, recent Early Years Foundation Stage training and first aid certificates. The setting has a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures in place which are implemented and understood by staff. All documentation which is required for the safe and effective management of the setting are in place, in line with regulations.

Leadership and management is good. Secure recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff with relevant experience, knowledge and skills. A written induction procedure is in place to support this. Planning and assessments are clearly linked to the Foundations Stage and staff work closely with the school to ensure that plans are effective. The manager has a good understanding of the setting and is committed to developing the care and education that the children receive. Staff benefit from regular staff meetings where they are encouraged to contribute. High priority is given to ongoing professional development and staff are well supported through regular appraisal systems.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider was asked to consider the organisation of lunch and to make the outside area more stimulating for children. They were also asked to develop opportunities for dance and to gather information from parents regarding children's learning. All of these have been positively addressed which has a positive impact on the children's well-being. Staff sit with children during lunch making it a sociable occasion for children and one of the outside areas has been developed making it more stimulating for the children, staff are fundraising to develop the other area. The dance sessions have been changed to creative movement which all children participate in and staff have very good procedures in place for gathering information from parents.

## **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 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):

- develop procedures to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when completing medication records
- consider the layout of the reading corner to make it more comfortable and inviting for children
- safeguard children by ensuring that a visitors consistently sign in.

#### **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):

- continue to develop everyday opportunities for children to develop mathematical skills.

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)