

St Aidans Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127570
Inspection date	28 November 2007
Inspector	Sarah Morfett
Setting Address	The Christopher Centre, The Alma, Leander Drive, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4NG
Telephone number	07715 337816
E-mail	
Registered person	Reverend Rich, Peter Geoffrey
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Aidans Nursery School opened in 1965. It operates from The Christopher Centre Community Hall in Gravesend, Kent. A maximum of 45 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:45 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 58 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, 41 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a local catchment area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs eight members of staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards the next level of qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean and hygienic environment. The staff follow effective cleaning routines such as, wiping tables with anti-bacterial sprays before children eat and wearing gloves when handling food. Children's understanding of good hygiene practice is promoted well. For example, they use anti-bacterial wipes on their hands before snack time and are reminded to wash their hands after going to the toilet. The staff develop their understanding further by talking to them about how this 'gets rid of germs' and 'keeps them well.' Children's health is promoted by an effective sickness policy. Through the policy parents are provided with guidelines to exclusion periods and if children become unwell during the session they are sent home. There are strong systems in place for the recording of accidents and medication. Therefore, children's health and well-being are thoroughly promoted.

Children have good opportunities to be active during the session. They can use a range of large equipment which challenges them physically, such as, slides and balancing beams. Through organised activities they learn how to negotiate obstacles and control their bodies. Children are able to use a wide range of tools during every day activities. For example, play dough tools and art and craft equipment help them to develop hand-eye coordination and promotes their fine motor skills. Children are provided with healthy food at snack time. Each day they have some fruit and a breadstick. They talk about their favourite fruit as they eat saying 'I like grapes, the green ones not the purple ones' they have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. Staff reinforce healthy eating messages by asking the children to point to food that is good for them on a poster. Therefore, they begin to understand what food is good for them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. The staff endeavour to make the centre warm and welcoming by putting up the children's own pictures and displaying posters. Toys and resources are laid out each morning to ensure the children arrive to a bright and inviting setting. They come in eager to see what there is to play with. The range of resources are in good condition and provides children with good learning experiences. Equipment is checked regularly for safety and cleaned thoroughly each term. Therefore, children benefit from the good condition of the resources.

Children's safety is of high importance for the group. Daily risk assessments are carried out at the beginning of each session to ensure that the areas they play are safe. Outside areas and any outings the children go on are thoroughly risk assessed. Therefore, all hazards are minimised and children are protected. They take part in organised group role play activities to learn to keep themselves safe. For example, they practice road safety, learning how to use crossings and take part in regular fire drills learning how to react in an emergency situation. Children's understanding of their own personal safety is well developed.

Children are protected from harm and neglect. A thorough child protection policy is in place and contains good information of the process to follow if there were a concern about a child in the group; including a procedure to follow if an allegation of abuse were to be made against a member of staff. Staff receive regular training to keep them up-to-date on current legislation. They are fully aware of their duty to protect the children they are looking after and

are familiar with the procedures. Therefore, children are safeguarded within the care of the group.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the nursery. The activities are set out in two rooms and they flow freely between the two making choices about what they play with. They enjoy time playing together, as much as time in small key groups, where they take part in activities linked to the Early Learning Goals. They feel secure and comfortable within the familiar routines and build good relationships with the staff, looking to them for reassurance and thoroughly enjoying the interaction as they play. Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities for the children under three which means they learn well through play and make good progress.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn through play. They develop this knowledge through regular meetings and training opportunities. Teaching methods are good. For example, staff challenge the children by asking open-ended questions as they play. This makes them think and extends their learning well. When children first start the staff work with parents to find out about their skills, interests and what they can do. Staff move children forward by making regular observations on them and using this information to identify the next steps in their learning. They then take this information and plan interesting activities which promote children's development. The close staff team work well towards promoting outcomes for children.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities which cover all the areas of learning. Their independence is developed well as they learn to manage developmentally appropriate tasks, such as, taking themselves to the toilet and pouring their own drinks at snack time. They develop good relationships with each other and work together at tasks such as, building sandcastles in the sand play. Children are given plenty of opportunities to mark make and use writing for a purpose. For example, they use post it notes to make tickets for a bus journey. One child hands these tickets out to the staff and children, then the child gathers everyone together onto the bus. The staff join in and extend this experience asking where they are going and then introducing the song 'the wheels on the bus' Children make connections through the role play and their language is developed well.

Children gain confidence in using numbers and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines, For example, they count in group activities noting how many children are present and name shapes as they complete puzzles and drawings. They learn about the natural world as they take part in growing activities. Their understanding of information technology is promoted through regular use of computer programmes which supports their learning. Children enjoy many craft activities such as, making Christmas decorations with the staff. However, there is a limited range of activities with which they can freely express themselves. Their imaginations are engaged as they take part in rehearsals for their nativity play. Children thoroughly enjoy acting out the play and joining in with the songs building a good repertoire. Children's learning experiences within the nursery school are consistently developed which prepares them well for the transition into primary school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a good understanding of the world around them as they take part in organised activities which promotes diversity. For example, they enjoy tasting food from different cultures and dressing up in traditional costumes. They play with a good range of toys and resources which promotes positive images in all areas of equality. Staff cater for their individual needs because parents provide useful information about their children's medical and dietary requirements as well as their likes and dislikes. The setting has some effective arrangements to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Close links are made with outside agencies who support them well. Individual Education Plans are developed to help the children move forward.

Children behave well at the nursery as strategies used to manage their behaviour are consistent. Praise and encouragement is used frequently. Therefore, they become confident and have good self esteem. Staff deal with any behaviour issues quietly and calmly, getting down to the children's level and talking through the problem helping them to sort out their differences. Parents receive a good range of written information keeping them informed of the care their children receive. They are actively encouraged to give feedback through a questionnaire system and receive a termly newsletter which informs them of the events and activities which children participate in.

The partnership with parents is good. They say they build good relationships with their child's key worker and feel confident to discuss their children's development with them. They are aware that developmental records are kept on their children and know that they can ask to see these at any time. Parents report that they are very happy with the care and education their children receive and that they feel well supported by the nursery school staff.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through positive discussions with the staff and through the range of activities provided for them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a well-organised environment. Space is utilised well and activities are set out so that they can move around with ease. Therefore, they make the most of the good learning experiences available. Staff are deployed well throughout the session enabling them to offer good support to the children. All staff who work with the children hold an appropriate childcare qualification. Effective systems are in place to ensure the adults working with children are suitable to do so.

All required documentation and paperwork is in place and well-maintained. The nursery displays their registration certificate and ensures that children's attendance is noted. However, their arrival and departure times are not recorded. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures make up the groups operational plan. Policies on lost or uncollected children are particularly clear and ensure staff know what to do should this situation arise. The provider recognises the group's responsibilities for investigating any complaints parent and carers may have and takes positive steps to provide the parents with the contact details of Ofsted.

The leadership and management is good. The manager has clear aims for the learning and progression of the children. This is communicated through the range of written information

provided. This makes up an effective operational plan that underpins the good practice and smooth running of the nursery. Staff hold regular meetings to discuss the children's progress, next steps in learning and to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities. Staff receive good support through staff meetings and an appraisal system. Training needs are established to develop the staff. The close staff team are dedicated towards the continuing improvement of the service provided. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the nursery were asked to develop staff's awareness of effective ways to manage children's behaviour and to increase resources which promotes positive images. Staff have developed their knowledge and understanding of effective strategies to manage children's behaviour. Therefore, they deal with any behaviour issue consistently. They have also developed a good range of resources which promotes diversity. Children gain a good understanding of diversity as they take part in the many organised activities which incorporate the equipment. The nursery was also asked to improve their time management so that the children are motivated and interested at all times. They have reviewed the routines and children are able to move freely through the activities deciding when they have their snack and when they go to the toilet. Therefore, learning experiences for children have been well developed.

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 complaints 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):

- ensure that children's arrival and departure times are noted on the record of attendance

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 creative activities so that children are able to express themselves freely

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