

St Aidans Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 127571
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Inspector Mary van de Peer

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St Aidans Nursery, a pre-school, opened in 1979 and operates from one room in a church hall located in Gravesend, Kent. A maximum of 26 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open all week, from 9am to 12 noon, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 32 children in the early years age group on roll. Children come from the local community. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and is also able to support children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery employs five staff. Of these, four staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the local authority. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The practitioners at this setting promote the unique needs of each child and support their welfare and learning effectively, children can enjoy exploring within safe boundaries. The partnerships with parents and other providers are developing very well and help to ensure that the care and learning needs of the children are consistently met. However, some of the observation records are not always evaluative and choices for children throughout the sessions are occasionally limited. The strengths and priority areas for development are identified and set out with realistic priorities for development in place. These practices help to promote effective outcomes for the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that observations and assessments are evaluative and children's next steps are more clearly identified and their progress monitored effectively
- review children's group times to ensure there are also opportunities for self-chosen activities, further promoting their independence.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded effectively through up-to-date policies and procedures, ensuring their welfare is promoted at all times. Staff have attended safeguarding and child protection training. They are clear about what to do should they have any concerns about a child. A full range of guidance is easily accessible. These

measures show that children's safety and welfare remains the setting's priority. Systems for recruitment and vetting are effective and ensure that all adults working with the children are suitable. Good use of risk assessments includes thorough checks every day to ensure that children are safe at all times. All required records and documentation are in place, including clear information for parents on how to raise complaints or concerns.

Everyone involved in the organisation and running of the setting is committed towards ongoing improvement and the recommendations set at the last inspection have been addressed. The wide range of resources available offers each child good choice and variety. Staff receive good support, through staff meetings and attending training events. Staff are effectively deployed helping ensure good quality provision for the children. However, occasionally at group times during the session, children have a limited choice if they do not want to participate in the adult-led activity. This leads to some younger children finding it difficult to concentrate for longer periods. Equality and diversity is embedded into everyday practice. The overall learning and development needs of each child are known and addressed, although observations sometimes lack evaluation to clarify children's next steps. Children's understanding of diversity is promoted well through the toys, resources and experiences provided. Policies and procedures are clear and effective and the learning environment is equally available to all children.

The use of self-evaluation is good and addresses all areas of the provision. The Ofsted self-evaluation document is used and the setting's strengths and any areas for improvement are identified and reviewed appropriately. Children and parents contribute to the process and their views are taken on board. Recent improvements include how play opportunities are presented to the children and the updating of the policy documents. Future targets for improvement are realistic in order to ensure effective benefits for the children.

Partnerships with other settings, such as infant schools and children's centres, are developing well. For example, children benefit from visiting the reception classes and when the teachers visit to share in aspects of their learning and development. This helps to ensure children's individual abilities and needs are known at an early stage, to promote more effective transitions into school.

Engaging with parents is good. They are provided with ongoing information about their children's experiences and achievements. Written information about the Early Years Foundation Stage, policies and procedures are also shared. Parent's views are sought and acted on and they feel the staff are very approachable and show an interest in getting to know their children well. They state they are included in many aspects of the setting. This includes attending the group to contribute to learning experiences for the children and view or update their progress records. Overall, this helps to provide every child with good continuity of care and learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children, parents and carers receive a warm welcome from the staff as they arrive and settle in. Practitioners support children's learning well. For example, they use pictures and charts to help children work out what the weather is that day. Children are given many opportunities to practise their skills in relation to letter and number recognition and counting. Laminated pictures of the different resources and toys available help children plan what they may want to play with during the session, and all children are equally included. This helps to develop children's visual and recall skills and promotes their confidence to take part in new challenges.

Children are able to access a good range of toys, resources and experiences that cover all areas of learning. Staff are well deployed and make sure they are available if children need help but are also aware of the need to 'stand back' and allow children to play without interference. For instance, two children are enjoying making shapes with bricks, staff are observing, allowing them to talk about what they are doing. Outside, children use magnifying containers to look at small wildlife. Several children are looking at a woodlouse, they are counting the legs and describing its colour. The member of staff is careful to say that they must not keep it in there too long. Children are learning to respect living creatures. Another popular activity has a few laminated letters of the alphabet pegged up and children choose a letter, then find an item from a box of different objects beginning with that letter. They then put it in a tub of water and state if they think its floating or sinking and talk about why with the practitioner. The children display the skills required very well and are good at using words in their correct context, for example, floats, sinks, heavy and light.

They demonstrate curiosity and interest as they move around and independently select their preferred activities. The environment is rich with posters of letters and numbers in varying contexts, encouraging early recognition and children are starting to make marks in various situations. Children's own work is also displayed, promoting their confidence and self-esteem.

Effective planning for the play environment includes all the areas of learning. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's next steps so that these are incorporated. However, these are not always obvious in children's progress records and planning documents. Children's learning is extended as they play and all can build on current abilities and interests. Children's starting points are clearly recorded and clear observational assessment includes photographs and samples of children's achievements to demonstrate their good progress.

Children feel safe in the setting and demonstrate this through their eager attitudes towards learning and the staff who care for them. If children find it hard to settle, they quickly respond to their key worker's input and begin to feel secure and safe as they play. Children learn about safety issues through ongoing, effective procedures. For example, they know that they must follow the arrow on the painted road in the outdoor play area, to avoid knocks. An emergency evacuation

of the premise is practised regularly, giving children the opportunities to develop a good awareness of personal safety.

Children's good health and well-being is actively encouraged. They enjoy regular physical exercise and can find a quiet area, indoors or outside, to rest or look at a book. Children are involved in health and hygiene routines and know when and why they need to wash their hands. An antibacterial gel wash is provided too and children use this at the beginning and end of the sessions. Their independence with self-help skills is promoted well. Children eat and drink healthily and are offered a selection of fruit and vegetables, cheese and milk. Water is always available for children to drink throughout the session. Children are learning the benefits of healthy living.

Overall, children are very well behaved and have learnt the expected behaviour boundaries. They are independent and responsible with turn taking, for example, at snack time as they wait for a space at the table. They respond well to plenty of praise and encouragement and adopt good manners. Their learning, welfare and self-esteem is very well promoted.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met