

St Mary's Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Kathleen Snowdon

Setting address St. Marys First School, Hencotes, Hexham,
Northumberland, NE46 2EE
Telephone number 01434 608723
Email stmarysnurseryhexham@rmpc.co.uk
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 Mary's Nursery is a privately owned non-profit making 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. Children are based in two separate rooms in a two story building and there are fully enclosed outdoor play areas. The nursery also provides before and after school care for children attending the host school. The nursery is registered for 49 children under the age of eight. There are currently 140 children on roll. Of these, 91 are under eight years of age and of these, 66 are in the early years age range. The nursery is on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The nursery receives funding for the provision of free early education for two, three and four year olds. It is open Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. A total of 11 members of staff work directly with the children. Of these, one holds Qualified Teacher Status, one holds a qualification at level 2, one holds a qualification at level 4, and eight hold qualifications at level 3 in early years. The nursery receives support from the local authority and is a member of the National Day Nursery Association.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

All children make good progress in their learning and development. Older children in particular have lots of time and space to pursue their own interests, which adds to their enjoyment and achievement. As well as this, the good understanding staff show to the diverse needs of all the children attending, creates an inclusive environment which effectively promotes every child's welfare. All required records and policies are in place, although written risk assessments lack some essential detail. Recommendations made at the last inspection have been fully addressed, while partnership working and self-evaluation are good. As a result, the capacity for continuous improvement is good.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide younger children with time and space to concentrate on activities and experiences and to develop their own interests.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding is prioritised by staff, who support children well and help them to feel safe and secure. All staff are fully vetted to determine their suitability and their

knowledge of the signs and symptoms indicating abuse is good. Effective risk assessments help to ensure all areas are safe and minimise potential hazards in the environment. The written record of risk assessment includes all aspects of the environment that need to be checked, date of review and any action taken following a review. However, it does not state by whom it was carried out. This is a specific legal requirement of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is not met. Documentation is otherwise readily available and stored securely to protect confidentiality, including a clear equal opportunities policy which states the nursery's commitment to inclusive practice.

Good partnership working further promotes the inclusive approach the nursery takes. Staff work closely with other professionals and agencies to ensure that the individual needs of all children are met. In particular, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are supported very well. Links with parents and carers are similarly good. Parents and carers say they are kept fully informed of their children's progress through daily discussions with staff and through seeing children's 'Learning Journals'. Parents and carers describe the nursery as a 'safe, happy and enjoyable' place for children to be.

Effective self-evaluation enables staff to identify areas for development. Regular meetings allow staff to explore existing ways of working and new ideas and they reflect on their practice, to help secure improvement. They are encouraged to undertake relevant training to keep their professional knowledge up to date. For example, staff have attended recent courses in safeguarding, food hygiene, first aid and fire safety. Consequently, children's health, safety and welfare are promoted effectively. Good staffing ratios mean that all children are well supported in the well resourced indoor and outdoor play areas. This increases children's propensity to learn and helps them to develop confidence and self-esteem.

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

Close working with parents and an effective key worker system enables staff to establish children's starting points and abilities. This information, and the good understanding they have of individual children, help staff to make perceptive observations and assessments of the children. Observations and assessments underpin planning, which is clearly linked to the six areas of learning. This is effective in helping children to reach the next steps in their development. Indoor areas have defined play areas to encourage children to focus on their chosen task. The outdoor areas are also well designed and resourced. However, while older children are encouraged to concentrate on and pursue what interests them personally, younger children have less scope to do so, with routines occasionally taking precedent over children's choices.

Children overall enjoy a good range of interesting and purposeful activities, such as cleaning the ground with brushes and soapy water after a painting activity. This gives them lots of fun and enjoyment and promotes their personal, social and emotional development through learning to co-operate and work alongside their

peers. Children learn to count in sequence during number songs and they enjoy role play, where they use their imagination. Very good behaviour management techniques teach the children how to behave acceptably. For example, they are encouraged to talk respectfully to others and to listen when people talk to them; this supports their communication skills. The ready availability of crayons, chalks and pencils encourages them to practise writing, which promotes their literacy development well. The children are becoming increasingly aware of diversity. For instance, they play with and alongside children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Staff use these first hand experiences well to encourage children to value language diversity and to learn to respect difference. They celebrate festivals, such as Saint Patrick's Day and Chinese New Year, so they become aware of their own culture and traditions as well as those of others. In addition, they grow herbs and vegetables so begin to understand the origin of the food that they eat.

Good emphasis is placed on children's health and physical development. Staff are vigilant about protecting the children's well-being, exemplified when they apply sun-cream and help the children to wear hats in very hot weather. The policy for sick children is clear and made available to parents to explain the steps to take if a child becomes ill. Older children understand clearly why they should wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after handling the resident guinea pigs. Staff adopt effective hygiene practices to help prevent the spread of infection. Meals and snacks are well balanced and nutritious and help children to develop healthy tastes and habits. These positive early experiences give children a good start and help them to achieve good skills future.

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	2

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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