

St. Nicolas Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY240777
Inspection date	26 February 2008
Inspector	Judith, Mary Butler
Setting Address	The Reading Rooms, Taplow Village Centre, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 0EX
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Registered person	St Nicolas Playgroup
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 Nicolas Playgroup has been open since 1970. It is run by a voluntary committee of parents and it operates from within The Reading Rooms in the village of Taplow. The group have use of a large and a small hall, a kitchen and cloakroom facilities. There is an outdoor area available. The playgroup is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions run from 09:30 until 12:00. A maximum of 36 children may attend at any one time. The playgroup serves families from the local surrounding area.

There are currently 46 children on roll; of these, 44 receive funding for early education. Children attend from the local surrounding area. There are currently no children attending with learning difficulties or English as an additional language.

There are currently 10 staff employed to work directly with the children. Of these, five hold relevant early years qualifications. There are currently two staff members working towards a qualification in early years.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have daily access to the outside area which is open for the free play session of the morning. Staff inform children when the outside area is open and children can choose if they wish to play outside or inside. They access a range of equipment and resources to develop their gross motor skills including sit and ride toys, a balancing beam, hoops, balls and bean bags. Further equipment such as books and drawing materials are also available outside. Staff organise the hall to ensure physical apparatus is available each day. Children are confident in their physical skills, climbing over, under and through with ease.

Children develop a sound knowledge of the importance of personal hygiene through the gentle reminders offered by the staff, for example, reminding children to wash their hands before they have their snack. Effective procedures are followed by staff to enhance good hygiene within the playgroup, including wearing gloves when preparing food and wiping the tables to be used at snack time. Children are aware that the staff wear gloves to stop the germs at playgroup. Documentation to record accidents is in place, parents countersign completed forms and receive a copy of the paperwork. This ensures they are aware of any accidents that have happened to their child. Parents complete documentation if they wish their child to have medication while at the playgroup. However, they do not countersign the documentation to acknowledge the administration of medication and therefore children's health is not fully enhanced.

Children enjoy a good variety of healthy and nutritious snacks, including fresh fruit and savoury biscuits. Children are developing their independence and help themselves to the amount of fruit they wish to have. Snack time is a sociable occasion with staff and children sitting together and chatting about what they have been doing, holidays, and events that have happened in their personal lives. Staff discuss the individual dietary needs of children with parents and this ensures they are able to meet each child's needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are clean, well maintained and welcoming to parents and children. Staff offer children a warm welcome as they arrive at playgroup and this enables them to settle quickly into the routine of the morning. Children remain safe in the secure environment. Staff undertake and formally record daily safety checks to minimize risks to children. Further risk assessments are undertaken by staff to ensure children are safe while on outings; for example, staff walk the route of the nature walk to the churchyard prior to taking the children on the outing. Children have a growing awareness of keeping safe through reminders from staff, such as reminding the children not to run inside and to take off dressing up clothes before using the climbing apparatus. Evacuation procedures are in place and staff and children practise these at regular intervals. Visitors to the setting are informed of the fire exits.

Children enjoy the range of toys and resources available and self select from the variety set out each day. Children can make individual choices about what they wish to play with through the range set up or by choosing from the picture books detailing the toys available. Staff will obtain further equipment from the sheds in response to a request from a child. Staff clean and check equipment regularly and this ensures it is in good repair and suitable for the ages and

stages of the children attending the playgroup. Children's welfare is protected through the staff's sound knowledge of their responsibility to safeguard the children in their care. Documentation is in place to record and refer any concerns staff may have about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are keen to play and settle quickly into the playgroup routine. Staff know the individual children well and offer a high level of support and attention to all children. Children's language is promoted well by the staff through conversations and questions. Consequently, children are able to freely converse with adults and other children. Children access a good range of activities and resources and are enthusiastic when using equipment or taking part in an activity. They are keen to learn, explore and share their findings, for example, drawing the staff's attention to all of the crosses when out walking. Children have opportunities to play inside, outside be active and quiet within the daily routine.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children in receipt of funding for nursery education are making good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. The stable and established staff team show a good knowledge of early year's guidance and use this to plan an interesting and varied curriculum for children. Children are friendly and sociable and converse freely at group times, showing consideration for others by taking turns to listen and speak when sharing their news. Children are well behaved and share the toys and resources. They make good relationships with adults and other children within the playgroup and often seek out personal friends to play with. Children develop a sense of time through the established playgroup routine; for example, they know that after story time their parents and carers will collect them. Children really enjoy stories both in small groups and in a large group at the end of the session. They listen with wonder at the story being told by one staff member without a book. Children recognise their names and many are able to write their names and recognisable letters. They enjoy mark making and practising their writing in a variety of situations, including playing outside and role play.

Children learn about the world around them through a variety of topics and themes. These include Diwali, Chinese New Year and outings in the local area. Children enjoyed walking to the churchyard to discover spring flowers; they were excited to see the squirrel in the tree and discover secret doors. Children are confident in their use of technology including the camera and computer. Most children are able to navigate their way round simple computer programs. Children are confident in their counting skills; for example, counting up to 25 using the name cards of the children present. Staff provide fun activities to reinforce these skills including counting backwards and forwards at register time. Children use mathematical language in their everyday play, such as taller and bigger when building the tower and comparing it to their height.

Children develop their imagination through a variety of activities including singing and role play. The home corner is popular and children enjoy dressing up, caring for the dolls and 'preparing food'. They have a good repertoire of songs and enjoy singing these in small and large group situations. Children access a range of art and craft activities; however, these are often adult led and do not provide children with opportunities to freely express themselves with art materials. Children are confident in their physical skills and move independently around all areas of the building identified for their use. Many children are able to dress and undress

themselves while playing with the dressing up clothes or getting ready to go outside. They participate in activities that develop their hand-eye co-ordination; for example, using the peg boards and completing puzzles.

The stable staff team know the individual children well; they share information and discuss the children with parents. They chat to children about their families and this enables children to feel comfortable and secure in the playgroup. A key worker system operates and staff undertake observations on all the children. These are used to update the children's individual developmental records and track their progress through the stepping stones. Staff use effective consolidation techniques to reinforce children's learning including questioning, discussion and re-visiting topics and themes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents receive a warm welcome when entering this setting. Staff know the individual children well and offer support to those who require it when their main carer leaves. This enables the children to settle quickly into the daily routine. Staff treat the children individually and ensure they have their needs met. Children are well behaved and show co-operation in their play. They are aware of the expectations for behaviour. Staff offer reminders about these during group times, such as talking to the children about sharing and being kind to each other. Children help with daily chores, such as tidying the toys away at the end of the session. They are confident and enjoy the sociable time they have within the playgroup. Children learn about other people and the world around them through a variety of topics, activities and resources. These include celebrating festivals such as Chinese New Year, walks in the local environment and resources such as books and small world toys. Children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Verbal feedback from parents about the setting is positive and many parents return to the setting with second children. The playgroup operates an open door policy and parents may discuss their child with the staff at any time. Good exchanges of information take place at each end of the session and this ensures that staff and parents are able to meet the needs of the children. Parents are invited to attend an open day and this provides them with an opportunity to formally discuss their child with the key worker and view their developmental records. Parents receive information about the setting through the prospectus and notice boards and through discussion with staff. Policies and procedures are displayed and parents can access these at any time. A complaints procedure is in place; however, this does not contain the correct contact details of the regulator. Newsletters provide parents with further information about the setting, planned activities and playgroup routines.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff organise the available space in the building and outside area well. Children move with confidence and freely around all areas identified for their use. They make independent choices about where, with whom and what they would like to play with. Children benefit from the individual time and attention they receive from the stable staff team. This enables them to feel safe and secure in the playgroup environment.

Documentation is in place to ensure the safety, welfare and health of children attending and this is reviewed regularly by the management team. Effective procedures are in place to record

children's exact times and days of attendance. Visitors to the setting and newly recruited staff who have yet to complete the vetting procedures are supervised at all times. This enhances the safety of the children. Children gain from the good relationships and information sharing between the staff and the parents. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management are good. Staff show a good awareness of early years guidance including the Foundation Stage and National Standards. They use this to plan an interesting range of activities and resources for the children. All staff are involved in the planning process, with the senior staff taking the responsibility of putting the final product together. An established key worker system works well to support the children and effective relationships are in place between key workers and parents. Staff attend regular meetings to discuss planning, individual children and playgroup routines. Daily discussions and evaluation of activities takes place at each end of the session as staff set up or pack away the resources and equipment. All staff take part in an appraisal system and have opportunities to discuss and identify their individual strengths, weaknesses and training needs.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection for day care there were three issues to be addressed. These related to updating the uncollected child and child protection procedures. The management were also requested to ensure staff certificates were available at all times.

Since the last inspection the policies and procedures have been regularly reviewed and now hold all of the required information to enhance the health, safety and welfare of the children. Staff certificates are available within the setting and readily available at the inspection.

At the last inspection for nursery education the setting was asked to address two issues. These related to developing the appraisal system and improving the systems to formally share children's progress with parents at regular intervals during the children's time at the play group.

Staff are now involved in an appraisal system that clearly identifies their individual strengths, weaknesses and training needs. The nursery operate an open door policy and parents may discuss their child's progress with the key worker at any time. Annual open mornings are held and this provides parents with a formal time to discuss their child. This ensures they are fully aware of the progress their child is achieving within the time they spend at the playgroup.

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.

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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 parents countersign completed medication forms
- ensure parents receive information about the contact details of the regulator

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):

- develop planning to provide children with opportunities to freely express themselves through art and craft activities

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