

St. Nicolas Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Keriann Belcher

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

St Nicolas Playgroup has been open since 1970. It is run by a voluntary committee of parents. It operates in The Reading Rooms in the village of Taplow in the County of Berkshire. There is access to an outdoor play area. The setting provides a service for children from the local community. The sessions open each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm term time only.

There are currently 30 children on roll, of these 18 are in receipt of funding for education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Systems are in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 staff. All staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 36 children at any one time.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are making good progress in their learning and development as overall, the planning and most of organisation of the setting is successful. Children's safety and welfare are promoted. The setting offers an inclusive service and all children are treated with care and kindness. Effective communication with parents and the links with children's schools and nurseries promote continuity and coherence in children's learning. Self-evaluation is comprehensive and reflective, which means that the setting is continually improving all aspects of their childcare service to benefit the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the planning of the outdoor area to encompass the six areas of learning
- review the organisation of the group time session to reflect individual needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The team work well together to ensure that the individual needs of the children are identified and well met. The staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues and the procedures to follow should they have concerns that children are

being harmed. In addition the setting's policies and procedures undergo regular review to ensure they reflect current legislation. Effective risk assessments are in place, which identify possible hazards that children may come into contact with. Appropriate action is taken to ensure these risks are minimised. The staff are well deployed which ensures that children are well supervised and kept safe both indoors and outdoors. Children's safety is further protected as visitors to the group are recorded and there are robust procedures in place to ensure that any staff who are recruited are suitable. As a result children's safety and welfare is well promoted.

All required documentation is in place and maintained. A self-evaluation of the setting clearly identifies the current strengths and weaknesses of the provision to enable the group to prioritise for effective improvements.

Partnerships with parents and carers is good. Staff are approachable and give parents verbal daily feedback on how their child has been at the setting. In addition, open mornings are held termly to enable parents/carers to view their children's work and discuss their developmental progress. There are effective processes in place to ensure parent's views are considered in decision making about their child or the provision.

Many commented on the regular information; kind, friendly, dedicated staff, good settling in procedure, happy children, and the wide variety of topics and themes. The manager recognises the importance of ongoing professional development and staff are encouraged to attend regular training courses provided by the local authority. As a result, staff develop their skills and knowledge which impacts positively on their ability to improve outcomes for children. Additionally, the setting has met the recommendations raised as a result of the last inspection, which has improved outcomes for children.

Partnership with outside agencies is strong and underpins the successful delivery of the six areas of learning having a positive impact on children's safety and well being. The group currently works with a wide range of, outside agency such as the primary schools in the area, Inclusion team and local community members.

The setting provides an inclusive environment, much is done to promote equality by raising children's awareness of different life styles through celebrating special events, for example, Christian festivals, Diwali and topic work such as 'Dwellings'.

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

Children are happy and settled. The staff have a clear understanding of individual children's needs and consequently this enables them to make good progress in their early development through a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities. Children benefit from the management and staff's knowledge and understanding of the six areas of learning and additional educational programmes which are

implemented such 'SALLEY' ('Structured Activities for Language & Literacy in the Early Years') and 'ECAT' ('Every Child a Talker').

Observations are carried out on the children as they play and assessed to clearly identify the next learning priority for the child. Observation and assessment are linked to planning which is flexible, responding to children's individual interests, their starting points and their capabilities. However, the organisation of the group story-time does not take into consideration children's individual concentration span and their age/stage of development. A wide range of good quality equipment and resources that are easily accessible are set up in the rooms and outdoor play area. In addition, a pictorial book has been made to support children's communication to select toys and resources that may not be readily accessible on the tables. Children are supported in developing an understanding of sustainability as they have great fun building 'trains' and 'houses' from enormous cardboard boxes that have been recycled.

The children are learning about the wider environment and develop skills for the future as they grow herbs and runner beans and have access to programmable toys and the computer, which increases their interest in technology. The children's progress in communicating, literacy and numeracy are developing well. The children have opportunities to mark-make and practise writing for a variety of purposes. For example, they have pencils and paper in the role play area and they use their fingers and tools to make patterns and shapes as they play in the sand. The children are well supported in developing their numeracy and problem solving skills by daily routines. For example, during snack time the children enthusiastically talk about how many children are seated at the table. This is further developed as staff then involve simple diversion into the conversations with the children as they count how many of the children are girls or boys.

Children's creativity is fostered through craft activities where they can freely express themselves such as easel painting, gluing and sticking with various mediums or model-making with malleable materials. Children's physical skills are developing as they routinely access the outdoor area where they can move around freely and play with the equipment such as balance beams or climbing frame. However, the planning of the outdoor area does not fully encompass the six areas of learning. The setting is aware of this and is working towards addressing in the future.

Staff management of children's behaviour is good, consequently there are few incidents of negative behaviour. Children relate well to their key person who oversees their progress and needs. Children's confidence and self-esteem is extended by staff's constant praise and encouragement such as 'good listening' or 'good sitting' when children respond with desired behaviour.

Healthy eating is promoted by the group. Bread sticks, or an assortment of fresh fruit/vegetables are offered at snack time. Water and milk are offered to drink. Information is gathered at key worker meetings, prior to the child starting at the setting, regarding dietary and medical needs. Snack times are a social time and are used to support the children's understanding of making healthy choices. For example, the children talk about eating fruit because it 'makes you a superhero, big and strong'.

Children are also learning the importance of washing their hands at appropriate times during the session that supports their understanding of self-care and the spread of infection. Children are looked after with care and kindness in a safe environment. Regular fire practices ensure children develop an understanding of keeping safe.

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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