



## St Crispins School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Nursery Education

## 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Crispins is an independent school registered with the Department for Education and Employment. It operates from two large detached houses in the Queens Road area of Leicester. Ownership of the school changed in 2001, and the Foundation Stage of the school is now integrated with the Junior School; the foundation stage children being located on the ground floor of the junior school.

There are currently four children on roll in the Foundation Stage, all of whom are funded. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The Foundation Stage supports two children who speak English as an additional language, and has experience of working with children who have special educational needs.

The school is open Monday to Friday during term times. The school day runs from 08:40 to 15:30. One member of staff currently works with the children and is qualified. They are supported by other teachers and support staff in the school. The school also employs two additional

support staff, both of whom have early years' qualifications; and additional support for physical development is also provided by the Junior School's physical education teacher.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

#### Nursery education

Teaching and learning for nursery education is good. The children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning. They are happy and well settled in the setting and quickly become involved in a variety of activities. This is because staff have a gentle and kind approach, they take time to get to know the child and encourage them to join in. The staff set clear boundaries, remind them about school rules and expectations and reward them with points and stickers. Consequently the children behave really well; they readily take turns with little support and respond positively to reminders and explanations. Children are very independent. They take care of their own needs such as using the bathroom by themselves as well as cutting their own fruit and managing simple dressing tasks such as putting on their own coats.

Children are developing a wide vocabulary and enjoy speaking because staff take the time to listen to them and ask open-ended questions to help them to think. They confidently use words to explain what they are going to do. For example, a child explained how to make a picture with the wooden mosaic shapes using the hammer and small tacks. Staff know individual children well; they sensitively support them in learning English through signs, symbols and modelling the correct words. This means that children who speak English as an additional language are also making good progress in their language development. Children are developing a love for books and reading; they handle them carefully and know that print carries meaning. Some older, very able children are also beginning to recognise and make sense of familiar words both in books and on labels. Staff provide a variety of opportunities for children to make marks through using pencils, chalk and paint. Therefore, children are able to draw recognisable figures and write their own names.

In mathematics children are very confident in counting and recognising numerals. The younger children easily count how many children are present while older children are quick to recognise the number of boys compared to the number of girls. Staff are good at using everyday activities such as cutting up fruit to introduce children to simple calculating and mathematical language. Consequently children use size language such as big and little in their play and are familiar with common shapes that they see around them such as using circles to make the sunshine in a picture.

Staff undertake detailed assessments of children's progress and provide extensive plans for activities. However, information about each child's interests and what they need to do next does not inform these plans so they are not effective in promoting children's progress well. However, the staff know the children intimately and have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage so they use this knowledge to challenge children and adapt activities to their

needs. Therefore children are able to participate in all the activities and continue to make progress. The staff work flexibly with the children and respond to their needs, but the reliance on topics and timetables sometimes makes this difficult with less time being devoted to children being able to really embed their learning.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is growing rapidly. They explore how items and machinery work such as the tape recorder and older children are adept at using the mouse to make simple computer programmes work. They are fascinated by the natural world, for example, looking at octopuses in the reference book to compare sizes and shape. The children also have a growing understanding of other cultures and beliefs because staff talk about differences and offer clear explanations. They also participate in the celebration of different festivals and often join the whole school in these events.

Children's physical development is good. They enjoy joining the rest of the school for outside play and are skilled at weaving around the other children as they run. Other activities such as music and movement are effective in helping children develop their skills in hopping, jumping and balancing. The provision of activities such as cutting their own fruit are helping them to develop good fine hand movements. Children are gaining a sound understanding of healthy eating and the need for physical exercise from topics such as All About Me. Staff provide opportunities for children to use glue, paint, collage and other media so that they can create their own art work both in two and three dimensions. For example they used recycled materials to make their own instruments which make different sounds. Children become absorbed in role-play, they invent their own scenarios from what they know such as 'Finding Nemo' and are beginning to involve others in this, assigning each other roles. Children's ability to sing and experiment with music is enhanced by a variety of planned activities as well as the music teacher who visits weekly.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Partnership with parents for nursery education is good. Staff have developed strong relationships with parents and work closely with them to meet children's individual needs. The Foundation Stage prospectus, which is given to parents, gives good information about the stepping stones and the schools curriculum. This ensures that parents are well informed about their child's educational provision. Parents also receive good information about their children's progress and achievements because staff share assessment records regularly with them. The staff seek information from parents regarding their children both when they start as well as throughout their time in the setting. Staff value this information and use it effectively when working with the children to meet their needs. Parents are actively involved in their own children's learning because regular newsletters keep them up to date with current themes and topics and offers ideas of things to do at home. The book lending scheme is also popular, encouraging parents and children to share and read together. Parents and staff are working together effectively to support children's learning and progress through the Foundation Stage.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children forge good relationships with each other as well as staff and other members of the school. They behave

really well, willingly take turns and share. They have a growing understanding and appreciation of the natural world and a growing awareness of their own and other cultures.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management for nursery education is good. The small staff team in the Foundation Stage base in the setting work well together, supported effectively by the head teacher of the school. They are very clear in their aims and vision for the children; for example, they want them to be happy, enjoy and achieve well and continue to make good progress. The staff make appropriate use of self evaluation to work out their strengths and weaknesses and make improvements across all outcomes for children, consequently, the needs of all children for whom the setting provides are met. The head teacher in conjunction with the local authority mentor teacher support the staff well in taking up training to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. They evaluate their provision honestly and have a clear focus for future developments. For example, they are developing the provision of outside play to cover more areas of learning. However, the evaluation of their quality of teaching is sometimes less effective, leading to minor weaknesses in the planning of activities.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection in February 2004 the setting was asked to consider making minor improvements to aspects of its partnership with parents. Since that inspection the setting has improved the information given to parents about its provision. Parents now receive comprehensive information about the Foundation Stage and the settings curriculum, so that they are fully informed about what their children are learning. Regular newsletters and reading book scheme also ensure that parents are able to become involved in their own child's learning effectively.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

This is not applicable to this inspection.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **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 improve the evaluation and monitoring of the educational provision to ensure that curriculum planning is securely based on what the children are interested

in and need to do next so that the children continue to make progress towards the early learning goals in all aspects of the stepping stones.

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