

# The Nursery at St. Margaret's Day Care of Children

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Type of inspection: Unannounced  
Inspection completed on: 9 June 2017

**Service provided by:**  
St. Margaret's School for Girls  
(Incorporated)

**Service provider number:**  
SP2003003560

**Care service number:**  
CS2003016173

## About the service

The Nursery at St. Margaret's has been registered since 2002. It is registered to provide a day care of children service to a maximum of 32 children at any one time aged 3 years to those not yet attending primary school.

The Nursery at St. Margaret's is accommodated within St. Margaret's School for Girls located in the west end of Aberdeen; close to city centre amenities and travel links. The school and nursery are provided by an independent charitable trust. The nursery is in partnership with Aberdeen City Council to provide funded pre-school education to children aged 3 to 5 years. While the school only accommodates girls the nursery also warmly welcomes boys. Currently the nursery operates between 8am and 3pm Monday to Friday during school term times. After school care and a holiday club are also available; provided by the school.

The aims of the service were:

- To provide a positive, safe, welcoming environment for children to play, learn and develop.
- To work in partnership with parents and encourage communication between home and nursery to enhance each child's learning experience.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum in a stimulating environment, where children learn through child-led play and active exploration.
- To treat every child equally and to encourage independence; taking responsibility and ownership of their learning.
- To involve all staff in the planning and implementing of the Curriculum for Excellence, listen to and value their contributions and provide opportunities, internally and externally, for professional learning.
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- To use self-evaluation to maintain continuous self-improvement, for example through discussion, observation, development plans and review.

## What people told us

There were 20 children present during the inspection aged from three up to school age. We observed that children were very happy and self-motivated in the setting. Children talked to us about their learning and interests:

- "We are playing mermaids; mermaids are not real they are mythical creatures".
- "This book is about dragons; they are mythical creatures too".
- "Look at my sea creature' it's made from clay".
- "I made a mermaid".
- "I made a unicorn, unicorns are mythical creatures too. They have wings and they can fly".

Fourteen parents returned completed questionnaires to us before the inspection. We also spoke to two parents as they dropped off and collected their children all were very happy with the service. Most parents commented

positively on the warm, caring well trained, experienced and supportive staff. Many valued their children's progress in their learning. Written comments included:

- "We are delighted with the nursery, our child very much enjoys their time there. Our child is thriving in this environment and is very happy to spend their days with new friends there".
- "We are very happy with all aspects of the care and our child seems to be learning a lot !"
- "My child is very happy at the nursery and has built up their confidence considerably since joining the squad".
- "The staff are friendly, warm and professional. They are genuinely interested in the children developing in all areas and work hard to ensure that learning journeys are up to date and completed regularly. The children all seem happy and enjoy being at the nursery. The amount of outdoor activities are fantastic".
- "I am extremely happy with St. Margaret's Nursery. The teachers and staff under (named) supervision and assistants are excellent and caring. The children get to participate in lots of varied activities and trips. It is a lovely environment to play and learn for our child. A great nursery".
- "I cannot give enough praise and admiration for the staff and management of St. Margaret's Nursery".
- "I am absolutely thrilled with the nursery".

## Self assessment

The Care Inspectorate received a fully completed self assessment from the provider. The provider identified what it thought the service did well and gave examples of improvements in the outdoor area and learning opportunities for children. The self assessment identified commitment to continued improvement. The provider told us how the people who used the care service were involved in evaluation and how their feedback directed the development of the service.

## From this inspection we graded this service as:

<b>Quality of care and support</b>	5 - Very Good
<b>Quality of environment</b>	not assessed
<b>Quality of staffing</b>	not assessed
<b>Quality of management and leadership</b>	5 - Very Good

## What the service does well

The head teacher and staff had established constructive relationships with parents. Parents were fully involved and consulted about their children's individual care and learning. As a result children were enthusiastic coming into the nursery and settled well. Staff interaction was responsive and supportive and nurtured children's care and development very well.

Children demonstrated their learning about growing herbs in the garden, the life cycle of a caterpillar and mythological creatures in their play and conversations. Their pictures and models showed skilled achievements in interpreting their own ideas using a variety of media. Almost all were interested in and beginning to write

letters, words and numerals.

Children's views and interests were respected; staff consulted with them about their play and the environment in planning using 'floor books'. Photographs and text showed that children had a wide variety of interesting learning opportunities. Parents helped to extend the children's learning by sharing their skills and culture, for example by reading Chinese stories. Children were learning music, gym and dance regularly with specialist teachers.

Children's health and wellbeing was supported well. Healthy eating was promoted through snack and school meals. Children had taken part in the whole school 'Bucket of Kindness' initiative supporting them to become emotionally aware and responsible. Children's outdoor learning opportunities had been improved through the positive development of the outdoor area and staff management of children's free choice to play outdoors. Children played co-operatively making ice cream in their mud kitchen and used the wider playground space and equipment to develop their physical skills and confidence. Children were learning about their community on outings to local 'Wee Green Spaces'; an Aberdeen City Council initiative.

The nursery was very well-managed by the head teacher and lead practitioner. Staff were clear about the aims, policies and procedures and felt well supported through meetings and training. Staff were reflective and involved in evaluating the service and taking forward a relevant improvement plan. As a result children were provided with high quality care and a stimulating learning environment which was continuously developing.

Partnership with parents was supported through a parent forum, focus groups, curricular evenings, stay and play days, surveys and regular newsletters and updates. This contributed to parents feeling very involved and able to evaluate the service and contribute their ideas.

## What the service could do better

There was scope for staff to continue to develop the use of floor books to show clearer progression in children's learning through the flow of ideas and development of the topic.

Children staying for lunch had dinner with lower school classes in the dining room; this was a good transition experience for those moving onto school. However the height of the servery made it difficult for children to visually choose their meal. The restrictions on space between dining tables meant children could not be given all the staff support they needed with social skills and learning to use cutlery. The manager and staff immediately began to look at ways this could be managed better.

## Requirements

Number of requirements: 0

## Recommendations

Number of recommendations: 0

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

Inspection and grading history

Date	Type	Gradings	
13 Nov 2013	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good 4 - Good 5 - Very good 4 - Good
3 Feb 2011	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	5 - Very good Not assessed Not assessed Not assessed
20 Apr 2010	Unannounced	Care and support Environment Staffing Management and leadership	4 - Good Not assessed 5 - Very good Not assessed

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