

St Josephs Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116839
Inspection date	06 July 2007
Inspector	Sheena Bankier

Setting Address	Berkshire Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 5JJ
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Telephone number	01189413602 (not for publication)
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Registered person	Maureen Petersen
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Type of inspection	Integrated
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Type of care	Sessional care
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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 Josephs Nursery Group is a privately owned and run setting. It opened in 1987 and operates from St Joseph's Catholic Church where they use the church hall. The nursery practices the Catholic faith. A maximum of 24 children may attend the nursery at any one time aged rising three up to five years of age. The nursery is open from 09.15 to 11.45 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday morning and Thursday afternoon between 12.40 and 15.10 during term time only. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 27 children on roll aged from three up to five years. Of these 26 children receive funding for early education. Children who attend the setting come from the local area and community. The nursery is able to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three permanent members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years or teaching qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop understanding of a healthy lifestyle as staff discuss with them the importance of eating well and exercise. Children benefit from physical activity both in and out of doors, where they can practise and develop their skills. Bikes and ride on toys are provided inside and outside in the garden. A wider range of equipment is provided outside, such as slides and a trampoline. Children join in action songs enthusiastically as they move to music and put actions to words. Activities increase children's knowledge of why food is important for them to be healthy and to grow, for example, a range of seafood is brought in to show the children and staff discuss how the nutrients help their bodies. Posters which reflect healthy eating are displayed and a 'farm shop' sign with a variety of food pictures is available for role play. This reinforces children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Children are cared for in an appropriate environment to support their good health. They independently access tissues which develops understanding of good personal hygiene. Children wash their hands after using the toilet and after being in the garden. Children use liquid soap to wash their hands and paper towels to dry their hands. This prevents cross-infection. Although children regularly wash their hands during the session they do not always clean their hands before snack time.

Records are in place to support children's individual health needs. Information is sought from parents regarding any allergies, medical or dietary needs to enable staff to meet these needs. There are exclusions for sickness to prevent the spread of infection. Records of accidents are in place, although some are completed in pencil. This does not ensure a permanent record is maintained. Parents are informed of accidents. This ensures children's well-being. An appropriate number of staff at the nursery hold first aid certificates. This enables children's minor injuries to be attended to.

The nursery provides a daily snack to children to reflect a balanced diet, for example, crackers, biscuits and fruit. Children are offered healthy drink choices of milk or water. The nursery ensures children have sufficient to drink by offering 'top-ups' at snack time and extra drinks of water during hot weather or on request. Children develop social skills at snack time as they sit together in small groups around tables. However, their independent skills are reduced as adults pour the drinks.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children understand how to keep themselves safe, for example, a child realises that their shoe laces are untied and is aware it is a potential danger and approaches an adult for help. Staff raise children's awareness through reminders, such as sitting on their chairs properly. Children undertake the evacuation procedure on a regular basis which ensures they have understanding of it. Staff carry out appropriate daily safety checks to make sure the premises are suitable for the children. There are safe arrival and departure systems in place to ensure children do not leave the premises unsupervised and are only collected by authorised persons.

A warm and welcoming environment is offered to the children and parents. Staff welcome them as they arrive and exchange information with parents about their children's needs. Rugs and

carpet areas divide the hall into areas and provide children with comfortable places to enjoy their play. Posters and displays of children's artwork create an inviting setting. Children are designated a place in which to store their belongings as they have a named peg.

Children benefit from the good range of toys and equipment available. These are suitable for the age and development of the children and provide interest and challenges to them. The toys and equipment are maintained in good condition through regular checks and cleaning.

Staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard children in their care. They have a good knowledge of the procedures to follow if they should have concerns. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the nursery. They leave their parents and carers with confidence. Children quickly decide what to do from the good range of activities on offer and are well occupied. Friendships are established between the children and they relate well to each other. They enjoy the company of adults, seeking them out to talk to and ask questions. Children play happily together in small groups at their chosen activity and benefit from larger circle times, such as singing and story time.

There are a good range of resources in place which are used to the benefit of the children. Children take an active part in the play opportunities available. They enjoy creating with dough and tools and at art and craft activities, where a wide variety of different effects are created, such as with rollers, brushes, sponges and making shell rubbings with crayons. Children use their imaginations during role play in the home corner with dolls and toy telephones. Children play with small world toys, such as vehicles and road tracks, creating real and imagined experiences. The interest table of different shells and related books widens their understanding of the world they live in.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are very well supported by the staff, who encourage their interest and keenness to learn through lots of encouragement and praise. This develops their confidence in their abilities and provides very good support to their self-esteem. Children's thinking skills are motivated through staff asking questions both at formal and child initiated activities. This results in the children's learning being extended and developed. The curriculum is planned to the early learning goals and is used flexibly to ensure the needs of the children are met. The qualified teacher takes responsibility for planning the curriculum and all staff contribute their ideas. Staff evaluate the children's learning after each session through discussion and notes are made. This helps to provide further challenge to the children's learning. Children's progress is monitored on an on-going basis. A record of their development along the stepping stones is maintained with evidence of their progress, such as written observations and children's own work. The nursery has experience and understanding of how to meet and support the needs of children with disabilities or learning difficulties and children who speak English as a second language.

Children make very good progress in their development towards the early learning goals. They particularly excel in their literacy and maths development. They show very good understanding of number and most children count to 20 with confidence and have knowledge of basic times

tables. They recognise and are able to form numbers and understand how different numbers can add up to the same number, such as three and three to make six as well as two and four. Children hold pencils correctly and develop good control through activities, such as using stencils. They write their names well and form letters correctly overall. They understand about punctuation, for example, putting a full stop at the end of sentences. Children find their name cards and practise forming the letters by tracing over the letters with their finger. They also write over written sentences which the teacher has written for them, gaining very good understanding that print carries meaning. A formal approach to learning is offered and children complete work books and work sheets, for example, to recognise shapes and their names and to form letters. Children do not always use the skills learned in formal activities in their chosen activities, such as writing or attempting to write their names on their art work at practical activities.

Children behave well and show good understanding of the routines of the nursery, for example, they recognise when it is tidy up time and show enthusiasm in helping, sometimes offering to tidy up particular areas. They understand right from wrong and try and negotiate with each other. Staff support them when necessary to resolve issues offering ideas and solutions and promoting sharing and children's understanding of right and wrong. Children are interested learners and show keen curiosity about visitors and the activities on offer. Children concentrate very well, such as listening to stories as a group or playing board games in small groups. They listen carefully and respond appropriately, for example, answering questions and joining in words and phrases of poems and stories. They enjoy and confidently sing songs and carry out the associated actions. This develops their spatial awareness. Children independently use the toilet or wash their hands after messy play. However, their independent skills are not always fully promoted, such as pouring their own drinks at snack time.

Electronic toys promotes the children's learning of information and communication technology equipment. Role play toys, for example, toy telephones, washing machine and a microwave with buttons to press develops the children's understanding of how things work for a purpose. Children learn about people with different cultures to themselves through visitors to the nursery. They also play with resources in their natural play which reflect positive images of the wider world, such as dressing up clothes, dolls and books. Children learn to care for living things, such as herbs grown outside in the garden and sunflower seeds planted and cared for.

Children use their imaginations and their creativity well. They learn about the different effects tools and materials can have, for example, they make effective wax paintings as part of an 'under the sea' theme. They use construction bricks imaginatively along with a pirate ship and small world people. Staff promote children's understanding of colour through discussions, such as 'this colour is like chocolate'. This aids children's understanding and promotes their learning. Activities extend their learning, such as mixing paint colours to form different colours or light and dark colours.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy play with a good range of resources which reflect positive images of society, such as small world toys and dressing up clothes. These promote their awareness of others different to themselves. Themes and projects are undertaken and visitors come in to speak to the children, for example, about Chinese New Year. This enhances the children's understanding of other people and promotes acceptance. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's individual needs are known well by staff. Staff know them as individuals and regularly communicate with parents about their changing needs. This ensures they are aware of any changes and are able to support children appropriately. Equal access is promoted to all activities and toys by the staff. There is a clear policy in place for the care of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The setting works in partnership with parents and other parties and applies for one to one funding when needed to support children.

Children's behaviour is good. Staff provide very good role models to the children as they are calm and behave respectfully to each other and the children. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility as they help to tidy up and look after the toys. Good manners are well promoted, such as at snack time with 'please' and 'thank you' encouraged. Staff value the children greatly and this is shown through the frequent praise and encouragement given to them. Children's self-esteem and confidence is high.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents and staff have very good relationships and communicate effectively. This keeps parents well informed about what children are learning and how they are progressing. Parents are involved in their children's learning through bringing in items connecting to themes, attending events, such as the Christmas concert and children take home work sheets to complete. Parents are welcome to share their skills and backgrounds with the nursery, such as coming in to speak to the children or show them items. A complaints policy is in place and although it has the Ofsted telephone number the address is not in place.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff work well as a team and know the children and routines well. They use their time and resources effectively to the benefit of the children. Supply staff are experienced in the routines of the nursery and provide competent cover for absent staff members. This ensures the smooth running of the nursery. Staff are motivated and engage in activities for the benefit of the children. They have high expectations of the children's progress and development and show dedication in their work to support children. Good relationships are established with the local school which most children go on to attend. Additional visits are undertaken to the school to attend events and a record of children's development and progress are passed on. This results in a smooth transition into school.

All regulatory paperwork is in place although some lacks the necessary detail. The register does not record if children, staff or visitors have arrived or departed earlier or later than the normal session times. Pencil has been used to make records, such as accident records. This does not maintain a permanent record. Some documentation, for example, the complaints policy requires updating with the Ofsted address to bring it fully in line with requirements.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was given five recommendations. These related to documentation, staff qualifications, parents access to the group's policies and procedures and informing Ofsted of significant events. During the last nursery education inspection the setting was given points for consideration. These were in regard to the children's physical development and enhancing the children's knowledge of other cultures.

The nursery has mostly addressed the recommendations set. Two members of staff hold appropriate qualifications. This benefits the children's learning and care. Parents are made aware that they can access the full set of policies on request. This ensures they have access to the nursery policies and enables them to be well informed. The registered person is well aware of informing Ofsted of significant events or changes which protects children at the setting. A clear safety checklist is used at the beginning of each session by staff. This means the premises are suitable for the children's arrival. However, if children, staff or visitors arrive or depart at different times to the individual session this is not recorded.

Nursery Education

The nursery has developed a garden area with a range of equipment to promote children's physical development. This supports and enhances children's physical development. Children learn about other cultures through using resources as part of their natural play, visitors are invited into the setting and awareness is promoted through themes and topics. This develops children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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.

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 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 children follow good hygiene practice before they eat
- ensure documentation is updated and completed with the necessary detail and a permanent record is maintained.

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 further the children's skills learned through formal work to enable them to practise these in their everyday chosen activities

- promote children's independent and self-help skills in all aspects of the nursery routines.

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