

St Joseph's School and Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254641
Inspection date	06 March 2008
Inspector	Jean Otter
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Registered person	St Joseph's School Nottingham
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 Joseph's Independent School opened in 1934. It is located on one of the main roads out of Nottingham city centre. A maximum of 97 children may attend the early years unit at any one time. The school is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting also offers a morning club, after school club and holiday club.

There are currently 75 children under five-years on roll. Of these, 56 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The early years unit currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The early years unit employs 15 staff. One of the staff holds a teaching qualification and the remaining hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines and activities. They know it is important to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating meals as staff discuss germs on their hands and provide good verbal reminders. Older children can independently use the bathroom and younger children are well supervised. Children's good health is mostly supported because staff practise good hygiene routines such as wiping tables before and after meals and ensuring all preparation surfaces, toys and equipment are clean. Staff use protective aprons and gloves when necessary, for example, when changing nappies, which minimises the risk of cross contamination, however, the risk of cross contamination is increased when staff wear used protective aprons and gloves in an inappropriate area. Very good policies and procedures are in place which help children stay healthy and children with a medical condition are competently and effectively supported to maintain a full and active life.

Children learn about healthy eating via stories, group time discussions and focused projects, which has a positive impact on their understanding of healthy eating as part of a healthy lifestyle. A full menu is provided which is well balanced and nutritious. Older children eat their meals in the school dining room, which fosters their sense of self-esteem and prepares them for school life. Children can independently access fresh water whenever they are thirsty, ensuring they remain hydrated and all special dietary requirements and allergies are respected to ensure children remain healthy. Menus are displayed for parents.

Children have very good opportunities to take part in physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a wide range of toys and equipment. The early years children have regular access to the school gym where they enjoy movement sessions, games, and physical equipment suitable to their age and stage of development. Action songs and musical games help with fine manipulative skills and children learn how to move their bodies in different ways. All children have access to an outdoor area, where an extensive range of equipment is available. During the good weather, children have the opportunity for 'free flow', which means they can choose to play indoors or outside. A further range of activities are offered outdoors at these times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment where risks are limited through very good safety and security procedures. Access to the premises is monitored at all times via the intercom and reception service. A visitors book is used and visitors wear identity badges. Comprehensive risk assessments for outings and daily checks on the premises and equipment are completed to ensure children are kept safe. Children are well supervised. Fire evacuation procedures are displayed and are practised regularly ensuring that children are familiar with the procedures and can help to keep themselves safe in an emergency. Alarms are checked regularly and fire fighting equipment is in place.

Children learn about safety and how to avoid accidental injury through discussions, routines and activities implemented by the staff. They are vigilant and support children appropriately in safety matters. All new staff learn about safety procedures during their induction and safety matters are routinely discussed during team meetings. The premises are suitable for their

purpose, they are well organised and well maintained. Children have free access to a good range of high quality toys and equipment that effectively support their development.

Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of safeguarding children. Staff know signs of possible abuse and the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident within the setting, they are stimulated and motivated by activities and resources that they enjoy and are well presented. A key worker system ensures that children's welfare and development is monitored effectively and that they approach all staff with confidence for their needs, which are met well. Children interact very positively with staff which increases their sense of belonging and trust, and they benefit from familiar routines which are well organised. The setting is using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a wide range of activities for children under three years, and detailed observations and assessments are completed to help plan for their next steps in learning. Staff provide help and support and interact sensitively with the children to encourage their confidence and emotional well-being. Differentiation is used well across all age groups which assists children who need extra support in some areas. Children are learning good social skills such as being caring towards each other, sharing their toys and being helpful. Children's personal independence skills are nurtured well, most of the time. However, during lunch times, their skills are not called upon as staff complete all the tasks that need to be done. Children know how to behave appropriately and listen carefully to instructions from staff. A particular strength of the setting is the commitment by staff to engage the children in many and varied outings. Even the youngest children go out regularly, for example, they visit Nottingham Castle, go to the 'Barney' show, the Arboretum, the library, and on 'World Book' day they visited a well known book shop to join in the celebrations.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have extensive knowledge of how children learn, and methods used to introduce concepts to them are very successful. The stepping stones are used to clearly identify their achievements. Planning is very well organised, and ensures an exciting range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. Observations and assessments are completed and staff use these effectively to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning. Staff engage fully in children's play and work very well together, sharing observations and aspects of planning. Deployment of staff is effective, and ensures that children get the most out of activities. The balance between free play and adult focused activities is effective as staff provide opportunities for children to become independent learners, make decisions and take responsibility. Behaviour is well managed which supports an environment where learning can take place.

Children's achievements in speaking and listening are good and they have ample opportunities to speak out in a familiar group which promotes their self-confidence. They listen to, and are invited to contribute to stories and sing their favourite songs and rhymes. They show good interest in books, learn how the library works, and how to care for them with respect. Children are beginning to recognise familiar words and are learning that print carries meaning. They have good opportunities to practise their emerging writing skills and children are beginning to

write their own name. Children learn new words as vocabulary, which corresponds with a particular topic or activity is featured in the planning.

Children are beginning to count and are using numbers well. They have opportunities to develop simple calculation skills, for example, through number rhymes. The use of numbers, threads through many activities, including weights and measure and mathematical concepts, which are introduced in such a way that develops the interest and imagination of the children. Further concepts such as matching, sorting and sequencing are also included. Technology is accessed through various resources and children are learning basic introductions to science, for example, by working with magnets. Small scale construction is enjoyed using tools and manufactured toys.

Children are introduced to an extensive range of topics that help to develop their awareness of the environment and the world in which they live, for example, they learn about recycling and how important this is to the planet. They begin to show an awareness of change, for example as they plant seeds and watch them grow, they investigate living creatures, for example, looking at woodlice through magnifying glasses. The celebration of various festivals ensure they learn to respect differences in culture, they hear music from different countries and are learning to speak French. Children are encouraged in group time, to talk about familiar people and the things they enjoy.

Children move confidently and are developing good co-ordination skills. They use small tools such as scissors, paint brushes and trowels and have access to a wide range of large equipment such as balancing beams, climbing ropes, climbing apparatus and wheeled toys, which further tests their skills. Action rhymes and music and movement sessions that involve moving their bodies in different ways are particularly enjoyed. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines and activities. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their meals and staff provide good verbal reminders.

Children use a broad variety of different materials to develop their creativity and imagination. They explore texture through natural materials such as wet and dry sand, stones and shells and have the opportunity for free-expression as well as more organised creative opportunities. Painting, printing, drawing, colouring and malleable play is regularly available. Children respond well to the use of puppets as they are used to articulate and illustrate a story or song. Imaginative play is encouraged and small world figures are used widely in different scenarios to provide added interest. Children explore a wide range of musical instruments, have singing and piano lessons to further their creativity.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a supportive and caring environment, their self-esteem is developed well by staff who value their contributions, encourage 'helpfulness' and use meaningful praise and encouragement for achievements. Particularly good are the 'achievement assemblies' where even the youngest child is recognised for good work or behaviour. Children enjoy positive relationships with staff and their peers and staff embrace each child's individuality. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and encourage them to think about the consequences of their actions and to take responsibility. As a result of clear boundaries set by staff, children behave well, are very polite and are learning to take turns and share their toys. Children are encouraged to make choices about their play which fosters their independence and decision making skills. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting

and staff are committed to the full inclusion of all children. Children's awareness of the wider society and different cultures is introduced through a range of planned activities and outings. A good range of resources are available which give children a balanced view of the world and supports their learning in this area. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children settle well because staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. New parents receive good written information about how the setting operates and how the children will learn and achieve. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is being implemented very well and informs the planning process for the younger children. Parents whose children receive nursery education funding are given clear information about the educational programme and are kept well informed of their child's progress. Daily verbal feedback ensures parents are informed about what their child has been doing whilst attending the setting and more formal arrangements are in place to discuss progress and future educational and developmental needs. Regular newsletters, weekly planning letters and a useful parents' notice board helps to keep them up to date with the curriculum, matters of interest and forthcoming events.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who have relevant qualifications and demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of all children to promote their well-being. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and help to keep children safe. Staff have good opportunities to attend a wide range of training opportunities to increase their knowledge and practical skills, which in turn benefits the care and learning of the children. Children also benefit from a familiar routine, challenging activities and a staff team whom they are confident to approach with questions and for support, which is freely given. Space and resources are well organised to maximise children's play and learning and staff work well together to ensure the smooth running of the setting. The 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage are implemented very successfully in practice. Generally, the policies and procedures support the care, safety and welfare of the children and an accurate record is maintained of children's attendance. However, the complaints procedure does not reflect the required timescale in which a written response to a formal complaint should be submitted.

Leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. Staff work together in all aspects of decision making regarding the running of the early years unit. Particularly good is the positive way in which the school and early years unit share their resources and knowledge, to benefit the children. The manager of the early years unit works directly with the younger children and oversees the whole staff team, she, and the nursery teacher are motivated and competent with regard to the children's learning and developmental needs. Staff know the children very well and continually observe and assess their developmental progress which informs the planning for the next steps in their learning. The educational provision is monitored and evaluated to ensure the curriculum is being delivered effectively which also promotes the progress of the children. Each adult working with the children has a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and systems are in place which provide them with good direction and support. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection one action and several recommendations were made in relation to policies and procedures as follows:- devise an action plan of how the minimum qualification requirements are met, ensure the child protection statement is in line with current guidance, ensure the daily registration system of children shows the hours of attendance, ensure the policies and procedures for a lost child and an uncollected child are revised to include further detailed information and ensure that the policy which relates to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the current Code of Practice.

The action and all recommendations have been addressed. All staff are qualified and each of the policies and procedures highlighted have been reviewed and are now appropriate, supporting the safety and well-being of the children.

At the last Nursery Education inspection one key issue was raised as follows:- to continue with the development of the assessment system in nursery two.

The assessment system in nursery two is now in line with systems across the other group rooms. It is working well and promotes consistency across the observation, assessment and planning procedures.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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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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 cross contamination is minimised with regard to wearing used protective aprons and gloves in inappropriate areas
- ensure the complaints procedure reflects the requirement to respond in writing to a formal complaint within the allocated timescale.

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 children's independence skills at meal times (also applies to childcare).

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