

St. Joseph's Child Care Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 109923

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Registered person St. Joseph's Child Care Group

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care Full day care, Sessional care, Out of School 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 Child Care Group was registered in 1987 and is managed by the Board of Governors of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The registration has four provisions which are situated in the grounds of the school in Aldershot. They include a pre-school (operating two sessions daily 08:45-11:45 and 12:15-15:15 term time only), a nursery/crèche providing full day care (operating all year from 08:00-17:00), a breakfast club (operating 08:00-08:30) and their tea-time club (operating 15:15-17:30). Each provision has separate managers and base rooms, and all have access to outdoor play areas. They also use the school facilities including the hall, library and grounds. The provisions serve the local community as well as offering some out of catchments places.

The pre-school may care for no more than 36 children under five years; of these, not more than nine may be under three years at any one time and currently have 72 children on roll with the majority in receipt of funding. The nursery/crèche may care for no more than 36 children under five years; of these, not more than nine may be under two years at any one time and currently have 45 children on roll of which 22 are receipt of nursery funding. The breakfast club and tea-time club may care for no more than 72 children from four years to under eight years at

any one time and their number on roll is 170 as all children attending the school are eligible to attend. The holiday club currently operates for four weeks throughout the year, mainly summer holidays.

The setting supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language. The pre-school and nursery employ a total of 18 staff, and the majority of staff have early years qualifications at Level 2 and above.

The provision places strong emphasis on its Catholic ethos.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy access to a variety of physical play opportunities, both within their dedicated provisions and around the school grounds, that help them develop healthy bodies. Within the nursery staff maintain good hygiene routines, routinely wiping and disinfecting tables prior to snacks and ensuring that their rooms remain shoe free zones or through requesting adults wear shoe covers. Staff reinforce this expectation with older children; for example, by talking to them about the need to take off their shoes if they come into the building from the garden via the door leading into the room accommodated by the younger children. The pre-school staff ensure that all areas used by children are cleaned prior to their arrival and that good hygiene routines are completed by disinfecting tables and wearing gloves when preparing food. The areas used by children for the breakfast and tea-time clubs are clean and maintained in a hygienic condition. Staff in all four settings follow good hygiene procedures and demonstrate good food preparation practices. Children develop personal hygiene skills through following established routines and receiving support from staff as their developmental stage requires. Younger children and babies have their hands washed and the older children (in the nursery, pre-school and out of school provisions) independently look after their personal care. The display of relevant photographs in the nursery's bathroom area acts as a useful visual reminder for young children of the need to wash their hands and dispose of their paper towels appropriately afterwards. Children within the pre-school are aware of the requirement to wear sunhats when playing outside. Pre-school parents are made aware of the need to apply sun lotion to their children before they arrive.

Children's welfare and health needs remain protected through the implementation of a comprehensive range of health forms, however, some accident records are not consistently acknowledged by parents. The majority of staff throughout all four provisions hold valid paediatric first aid certificates and this assists staff when treating accidents or meeting medical needs. Parents provide information about their children's medical requirements and allergies and these are displayed within the setting to highlight them to staff. Any medication (for example, inhalers or Epipens) is kept in named bags and remains safely stored.

Babies have their home routines adhered to with staff respecting their individual sleep and feeding needs. Older children have opportunities to sleep or have quieter sessions. Staff provide comfort, support and encouragement to the children throughout the session and this enables children to thrive. Children under five have regular opportunities to enjoy outside play and fresh air with each provision having access to their own play areas. Parents are notified of the importance of providing suitable clothing as children will spend time outdoors every day unless the weather conditions are adverse. When weather does not allow for energetic outdoor play

they use one of the two school halls for music and movement or physical activities. Children attending the tea-time club use the main playground and playing field to play football, on the apparatus or ball games.

Breakfast club children enjoy a range of nutritious food provided by the school catering staff. They can choose from cereal or toast to a full cooked breakfast. The attending children are from all year groups at the school and sit together to eat and talk. The breakfast session is also open for parents and siblings to come in and participate. Pre-school children enjoy their new café style snack sessions. They enjoy a variety of fruit and vegetables through the fruit for schools scheme and pour themselves milk or water to drink. Staff monitor the session to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate. Children attending the nursery also benefit from the provision of fruit and vegetables at snack time which promotes their awareness of healthy eating. The older children make their own selections and staff invite them to cut their fruit up if they wish. Staff check children's lunch boxes each morning placing in the refrigerator any items that need it, to minimise any potential health risk. They are happy to re-heat food as requested. Babies and toddlers enjoy a calm lunch time session; everyone is seated together around the table so they can enjoy one another's company. They are encouraged to develop independence in feeding themselves as far as possible. Babies who are not yet at this stage are fed by a member of staff who sits alongside them and maintains good eye contact.

Those nursery and pre-school children over three years of age have the opportunity to either eat a packed lunch brought from home or a school dinner in the dining hall. Tea-time club children enjoy a wide variety of meals from cheese-filled pitta, crackers, cheese, fruit, cake and drink. Children have access to water throughout the sessions. They also take part in healthy eating topics and this promotes their understanding of nutrition, making food choices and how to remain hydrated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Nursery and pre-school children play in safe and secure premises. Staff effectively reduce hazards through the use of risk assessment and the installation of security doors prevents unsupervised access to their premises. Some children arrive at the breakfast club unsupervised by carers and prior to its operational opening hour and this has implications on their safety and the setting's registration. Parents departing with children from the tea-time club at times forget to sign their children out which also has an implication for safety and the setting's registration. All resources are in good condition with each provision having sufficient accessible and age appropriate equipment for the children attending. Within the two under five years provisions children freely and safely access boxes of clearly labelled resources from low storage units. Resources are set out prior to children attending the before and after school clubs. Staff share arrival and collection procedures with parents to support children's safety. However, there are some parents who drop their children earlier and/or collect them later than the session times state and this has implications for their safety as well as for the setting.

Children participate in fire drill practices and this develops their confidence in evacuating safely in the event of an incident. They receive clear instructions on how to remain safe through using tools and resources appropriately, not running inside and watching where they are travelling on bikes. Tea-time club children know the boundaries for their activities, both inside and outside, and ask permission before leaving their group. Pre-school and nursery children participate in planned safety topics.

Clearly written child protection policies, based on the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures, safeguard children's safety and welfare. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the child protection procedures. The majority of staff hold at least a basic knowledge of child protection with several having completed a two day multi-agency training (with other staff highlighting this as a professional development area). Child protection policies are shared with parents and highlight the procedure followed including that for when an allegation is made against members of staff. To safeguard children staff record any pre-existing injuries.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enter the pre-school happy and keen to attend. Staff greet them by name and make them welcome whilst also marking them on the register. Children arrive to find their rooms fully prepared and set out with a wide range of resources and activities for them to freely access. Children enjoy an excellent range of appropriately aged and stimulating resources, and with the current organisation of the setting this allows them to flow freely from inside to outside to play. Careful long and short term planning by staff ensures that children receive a good balance of activities during the term. Children engross themselves whilst playing with the resources on offer including role play, relaxing with a book, being creative with the paints, glue and sticking materials. Children confidently develop their own play ideas. For example, whilst outside playing with the sand and water trays children start to decorate the play house and surfaces with their sand and water mixture. They talk with each other about what they are doing and what they will decorate next. Staff fully enable this to happen by providing sufficient resources for them all to use, providing encouragement and giving very good support to them during their play.

Children enter the welcoming environment of the nursery well; they are warmly greeted by staff which helps them to separate from their parents and carers. Both of the rooms occupied by nursery children are nicely decorated with examples of their artwork and photographs. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere evident and children enjoy good relationships with the staff.

Staff working with children under three are using the Birth to three framework of good practice to support their development. They provide children with a variety of activities and experiences in the outside garden, which cater for different areas of learning. For example, they explore the different sounds they can make as they bang on the pots and pans that have been strung along a fence and paint the wall of the nursery with water using a selection of different sized brushes and rollers. Children enjoy playing with the small world toys, digging in the sand tray and they happily join in with the welcome song at the start of the session, clapping in rhythm.

Babies and toddlers have ample space to crawl and practise walking. Staff spend a lot of their time sat on the floor alongside children, playing and talking with them and providing cuddles. Children greatly enjoy exploring the contents of a large treasure basket and investigating the varied range of natural and everyday resources it contains. They join in with the actions of different songs that they recognise; for example, waving their arms in delight as staff begin to sing 'The wheels on the bus.'

Children arriving at the breakfast session are keen to come in and decide what they would like for breakfast once the catering staff open the serving hatch. Children sit to eat their breakfast and talk with each other, behaviour is exemplary and children from all years communicate with each other. After breakfast the children can play games, colour or draw for the short period left before the start of school. At the end of the school day children arrive at the tea-time club

and hang their bags and coats up. They can then access a wide variety of activities both inside and outside. The high ratio of staff to children allows children to choose where they would like to play. There are ample staff to cover separate groups of children playing games of football on the field, using external climbing equipment, playing pool and table football in the corridor area and completing puzzles within the main room. Staff prepare a varied range of snacks for the children and they all sit down around tables to eat this together. Children integrate well with each other and are aware of the rules of the club as they participate in developing them. Children of all year groups develop friendships with each other. Staff develop good relationships with the children and work well together.

Nursery Education

The quality of nursery education, teaching and learning is good in both the pre-school and nursery. Staff demonstrate a good level of understanding of the Foundation Stage (FS) and this allows effective implementation in both provisions. Pre-school staff are all very confident and secure in their knowledge of the FS and plan an exciting range of activities that children enjoy participating in. Both provisions ensure their planning covers all areas of the curriculum providing a varied range of opportunities to support children's development.

In the pre-school staff effectively assess the children's progress against the early learning goals' stepping stones. They effectively observe and monitor children's progress, and use these records to develop planning. All staff undertake observations on all children to ensure that all achievements are noted. Pre-school staff have an excellent understanding of each child's developmental stage and ensure planning differentiates between them, to provide more able children with challenge and to provide more support for those that require it. There is a good balance of child and adult initiated activities and staff enjoy their interactions with children during these activities. Children develop awareness of number, number patterns, shape and problem solving during both planned and child initiated activities. They count in to start each music session and then sing their names, noting how many beats they have. They are encouraged to work through problems for themselves, for instance if there is not a bike available, if the glue pot is empty or there is no money in the play till 'what can they do?' Children use books within their role play; they enjoy 'selling' books in their shop and 'writing' orders in their notebooks. They enjoy mark making and developing their pre-writing skills. Creative materials for art and craft are readily accessible to children and they enthusiastically paint and glue. They have access to a variety of materials for this including feathers, pulses, seeds and glitter. Children enjoy listening to stories, both as a whole group and in small groups. They enjoy singing songs together and confidently take turns to sing in front of the group. When the musical instruments come out this is extremely popular and there are enough for all to have a choice.

Children have ample opportunities to mark make. Older children are beginning to use emergent writing and recognise their own names. Staff communicate with children consistently developing their language skills, however, encouraging the linking of sounds to their letters is less visible. Those children with English as an additional language receive good support and are encouraged to share their knowledge. When a child brought in a French picture dictionary to show staff encouraged them to say the name of a few objects in French that the other children enjoyed copying.

Children develop good awareness of communication technology and the pre-school has a large viewing screen so several children can observe what is happening whilst waiting for their turn. They confidently use the mouse, change programmes independently and are aware of the need to take turns and share, using a timer to show them when their turn is over. They explore and

show curiosity as they plant seeds and watch them grow, and currently they are growing sweet corn, tomatoes, carrots and sunflowers for the Rushmoor in Bloom competition. Children learn about diversity and the wider world through sharing experiences and participating in topic work. There are daily opportunities for children to partake in physical development skills. They develop dexterity as they use tools such as scissors, glue spatulas and scoops in the sand and water. They develop spatial awareness as they ride around on bikes outside, carefully avoiding each other and any obstacles. They have access to the hall at least twice per week for music and movement sessions and using the parachute.

Nursery children are self-assured and happy. They are interested learners who show good levels of involvement in the different activities and resources presented to them. Children's personal and social skills are very good; they enjoy friendships with one another and interact positively with the adults caring for them. They are well supported in developing good levels of independence; for example, as they are encouraged to change their shoes themselves and to help tidy up their base-room before they go outdoors to play.

Children communicate freely with others and several have the confidence to stand up in front of the whole group and share their news. They listen with obvious enjoyment at story time and everyone joins in enthusiastically with well known refrains to favourite stories, such as 'Dirty Bertie.' Children choose to spend time in the book corner relaxing as they look at picture books together. They learn to recognise their written names as they self-register each morning and take part in adult directed activities where they are encouraged to look at alphabet cards and identify the object and the name and sound of the relevant letter. However, staff do not take advantage of the many opportunities that arise as part of the daily routine to further encourage children to link sounds and letters. Children can freely access mark making materials and they enjoy writing for a purpose. For instance, a group of children engaged in imaginative play, pretend they have a restaurant and eagerly write down what everyone would like to eat following the well timed suggestion of a member of staff that perhaps they could do with a notebook to write down people's orders. This captures the attention of other children and results in several others fetching notebooks, paper and pencils and 'writing' things down. The notebooks remain popular and children are keen to take them outside when they go out to play in the garden.

Children develop their gross motor skills as they move around confidently, both indoors and outside. They negotiate space and show awareness of the presence of others as they jump on the trampoline and manoeuvre wheeled toys around the garden. Children benefit from physical education sessions in the school hall where they participate in obstacle courses and access to the fixed play equipment in the reception year playground which offers them a greater level of challenge. They develop co-ordination and control as they pour themselves a drink and put on the dressing-up clothes, use a variety of different tools, and persevere at dressing the dolls.

Children recognise and name colours; they learn about shapes through planned activities and as they complete puzzles and put the railway track together. They join in with number rhymes, identify written numerals and count confidently as they participate in activities. However, they are not always encouraged to build on their developing awareness of mathematics as part of the daily routine.

Painting is a popular activity indoors and outside and children investigate what happens when they mix colours together. They add water to the mixture and are encouraged to wash out their brushes in clear water. Children remain busily occupied painting the plant pots, planted tyres and the nursery fence as part of their preparations for the Rushmoor in Bloom competition. Staff allow them the freedom to express their own ideas and this results in an interesting display

that is clearly child-led. This forthcoming event has also enabled children to find out about the living world and explore change as they plant vegetables and flowers. Children know that the plants will need sun and water to grow. Topic work raises children's awareness about different subjects. For instance, they talk about sun safety at circle time; children are aware of the need to wear sunhats and sun cream in sunny weather to protect them from getting burnt. A recent cultural week has provided opportunities for them to find out about other countries with the input of some parents who have helped them find out about Austria and Argentina.

Children enthusiastically join in with songs and rhymes and they greatly enjoy making music as they independently access an interesting selection of musical instruments. They successfully operate the computer, using the mouse to complete different games and to access different programs.

Nursery staff have been developing their planning, observation and assessment systems since the last inspection and are making good progress with this. They are very aware of particular aspects they wish to develop further. Children's progress towards the early learning goals is tracked through the stepping stones and staff are now using their knowledge of children to identify the next steps in their learning and thus to inform their planning. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and gently remind them of the importance of listening to their friends when someone else is talking and the fact that the 'treasure' in the sand tray belongs to everyone. Children behave extremely well overall; any minor issues, for example, over turn-taking are resolved very quickly, calmly and with the absolute minimum of fuss.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are policies in place promoting equal opportunities and inclusion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities in place for all provisions. All provisions ensure that children who have English as an additional language receive appropriate support and information is sought from parents to enable this. Staff confidently identify any emerging learning difficulties and disabilities, and ensure that they liaise closely with parents and any external professionals to meet their needs. Children with identified additional needs receive cohesive support from the staff they associate with.

There is a sense of community within the school and the provisions with close links developing between them all. Children happily arrive at each of the settings with staff greeting them by name. This develops their self-esteem and promotes a sense of belonging. They settle well and the routines are familiar to them. Children confidently interact with each other and the staff, who show caring attitudes and concern for their well-being. The Breakfast club has a feeling of community as some parents and siblings accompany the school children for breakfast.

Children gain an awareness of the locality they live within and learn to recognise and value differences in society and between each other. Planned and impromptu topics, activities and resources provide opportunities for children to share their home backgrounds and learn about the wider world. Children have access to role play areas, dressing-up clothes, festival and celebration activities, and visits from organisations like the police and fire brigade. Some of the provisions encourage parents to share their skills and cultural backgrounds to a greater extent than others.

Those children who are preparing to start mainstream school receive good support to aid their transition. Younger children meet reception children to play together in the school playground,

share school lunches and staff liaise with early years teachers. They visit the library and use the halls and this helps familiarise children with the school, supporting a smooth transfer between the nursery, pre-school and reception class.

Children throughout the provisions display excellent behaviour. They show care and concern for each other, helping each other and staff with tidying up, sharing resources and assisting friends. Staff are consistent in their management of the children and ensure that children's comments are listened to and providing positive praise. They set themselves up as good examples to the children. All children demonstrate an awareness of how to behave and the difference between right and wrong. They are comfortable and confident with sharing this with staff, other children and visitors. The older school attending the tea-time club help develop the rules for behaviour to follow and happily remind each other of them if they observe a breach. Children's spiritual moral social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers of children using all the provisions is good. Each provision ensures that parents receive information about the setting, access to their policies and procedures, newsletters and the nursery and pre-school also provide daily feedback and regular activity sheets on how their children have been that day. Parents develop good relationships with staff and this supports the children's feeling of well-being in the two provisions. All provisions seek feedback from parents and children in the form of a suggestion box, and parental and child questionnaire. Staff act on any suggestions made to further enhance the service they offer. During the tea-time session children now have a greater variety of snack choices and a quiet area allocated for completion of homework. There is a complaints policy in place and parents are made aware of how they can raise concerns.

Parents in receipt of nursery education funding see displays and receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the different topics staff will be introducing to their children. They receive invitations to participate in open days and staff make themselves available to discuss any information or concerns they may have at the start and end of sessions. Each child has an allocated key-worker responsible for recording their progress and achievement records, however, all staff undertake child observations (passing these to the designated key-worker) to ensure that any achievement or skill is not missed. Parents' evenings enable parents and carers to meet with their child's key worker to discuss their progress and achievements and to identify jointly areas for development where this is felt to be appropriate.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of each provision is good. The overall management team is actively supporting the progression of the child care on offer and the promotion of good practice. They are keen to provide good quality childcare for the community. There are rigorous and effective internal recruitment and vetting procedures in place which protect the children's safety and welfare. However, the internal procedures for ensuring that the regulatory body is promptly notified of change requires reviewing. Documentation, policies and procedures are accessible within the provisions and these undergo regular reviews. Records are shared with parents appropriately. Deployment of staff is effective and a high staff to child ratio is maintained to ensure children receive good support during their activities. The provisions meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

All staff have put a lot of commitment into monitoring and evaluating the strengths and areas to progress within their provisions. Each area of childcare now carries out self-evaluations on

the service they provide to ensure that they highlight areas for staff professional development and areas to enhance the activities and resources they provide for children and parents. The nursery is currently working towards accreditation with the Pre-School Learning Alliance and the Index for Inclusion. The individual staff teams work excellently together to provide a cohesive care environment for children. They all participate in planning meetings and share knowledge, skills and experiences with each other. Managers constantly evaluate the provision of nursery education and develop action plans to support the introduction of the early years Foundation Stage curriculum. The head teacher and managers maintain excellent links through daily informal exchanges of information and their attendance at management and governors meetings. Managers and teaching staff work together to ensure children transfer into school as easily as possible through frequent visits and exchange of information.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the provision were required to develop an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met. There are now qualified staff in place in most of the provisions and those managerial staff with no current qualification are currently on training courses. They were to make available to parents a written statement that provides details of the procedure to be followed if they have a complaint and the policies and procedures are now in place. Another recommendation was to ensure that the child protection procedure includes the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. The child protection policy has been updated to include this. They were to improve knowledge and understanding of the requirements set out in regulations; the staff and managers now demonstrate this knowledge and awareness.

The provisions were to ensure that all records relating to day care activities were readily accessible and available for inspection at all times and they have addressed this. They were to develop a procedure to be followed in the event of a parent failing to collect a child or of a child being lost. There are now comprehensive 'Lost child' and 'Uncollected child' policies in place. Lastly they were to maintain a system for registering children and staff attendance on a daily basis, showing hours of attendance and retain for the minimum period set out in regulations and this has been completed for most of the provisions with the breakfast club still to address this fully.

Under the nursery education inspection the nursery and pre-school were to evaluate the system for observing and recording nursery children's progress to support the identification of their next steps in learning and staff are now evaluating more and undertake regular observations linking these into future planning. They were to provide frequent opportunities for children to freely initiate art and craft activities to develop their imagination and creativity. Children now have free access to a variety of materials for creative work. Lastly they were to develop children's use of writing for a purpose during free play activities. Now the provision ensures daily that there are plenty of writing implements and paper available for children to use in their play.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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):

- improve existing arrival systems in respect of children attending the Breakfast Club, their supervision and the methods for promptly recording their presence.
- ensuring that any accident or incident records are consistently acknowledged with a parental signature.
- review the internal procedures to ensure the regulatory body is promptly notified of any significant changes affecting the premises and/or staffing, ensuring the appropriate staff forms are completed and sent in.

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):

 make greater use of opportunities that arise during the session to build on children's use of mathematics (nursery) and awareness of linking sounds and letters (nursery and pre-school)

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