

# St John in the Wilderness

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

EY384056

**Inspection date**

14/12/2010

**Inspector**

Abigail Cunningham

**Setting address**

The Sunday School, Church Bank Lane, Cragg Vale, West  
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**Type of setting**

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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## **Description of the setting**

St Johns in the Wilderness Kindergarten opened in 2009, and is a Steiner facility supported by Calder Valley Steiner Education. The kindergarten is a registered charity and is run by a committee. It is situated in the Cragg Vale area of Halifax. It operates within the Sunday school of St Johns in the Wilderness church and has shared use with other community groups. The children have access to the willow kindergarten room, which is situated on the ground floor and the birch kindergarten room, which is situated on the first floor.

The kindergarten is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. The kindergarten serves the Calder Valley area and the local community of Cragg Vale and is registered for 36 children under eight years, of whom no more than 36 may be in the early years age group. There are currently 28 children on roll. The kindergarten provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

The setting is open five days a week from 9.45am until 1.45pm in term time only. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area. The setting is accessed via a small step at the front of the property. The kindergarten employs six staff, three of whom are Steiner trained and one member of staff is working towards achieving this. Two of the staff have recognised early year's qualifications. The setting receives support from the Local Authority and the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

At the time of this inspection, the provider has been granted exemption by the Secretary of State from parts of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. These parts were excluded from this inspection.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The staff team are highly committed to working in partnership with others and they take a lead role in establishing effective relationships. Self-evaluation is effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses and it is used to make significant improvements. The children are making good progress in their learning and development, for example, they are making positive relationships with others, they are developing a positive approach to being healthy and they enjoy practising their self-help skills.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure all practitioners have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding

issues.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

All the required checks have been carried out on the staff and committee members. Therefore, effective systems are in place to ensure that practitioners and other adults who are likely to have regular contact with children are suitable to do so. The staff team have completed induction training and know the different types and signs of abuse. They also know to record any safeguarding concerns and to seek advice where necessary. However, only one member of staff and one member of the committee have attended safeguarding training, therefore, not all staff have an up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.

The children are supervised at all times and the system for managing access to the premises is good as unauthorised persons are unable to gain entry and there is a record of visitors. Detailed written policies, procedures and documentation are in place, to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Thorough risk assessments are regularly undertaken and reviewed, as a result all hazards have been identified and minimised. For example, safety gates are in place to prevent children accessing the stairs. The children have daily opportunities to handle tools safely for example, they use knives to cut vegetables. They are developing an understanding of dangers and how to keep themselves safe, for example, one child explained, 'if you touch the candle you will get burnt'.

There are comprehensive improvement plans in place and these are devised, with the views of parents, committee members and the whole staff team taken into consideration. As a result of working in partnership and consulting with others, enough money has been raised to begin the process of buying the building from the church. There are also plans in place to have a lift installed, to improve access to the rooms on the first floor.

There is a well-established and effective system in place to gain information about children before they start at the kindergarten, which includes a home visit. As a result, the staff are fully aware of the children's backgrounds, individual needs and starting points. Parents receive regular information via e-mail, parents' evenings and daily feedback from the staff. The staff add parents' comments to their child's development record. The kindergarten also involves parents in various fundraising events, such as the Nepal fundraising cafe.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children**

The kindergarten is a very welcoming and calm environment. It is decorated in soft colours and fabrics. Equipment and toys are made of good quality natural materials, which include a dolls house, a den, wooden logs, wooden blocks and hand-made dolls. There is a strong emphasis on caring for the environment. The

children are very much encouraged to look after the kindergarten's equipment, for example, the children are involved in fixing toys and tidying the room after play. The children wear waterproof suits and can play out in all weathers. They are active and understand the benefits of physical activity. The children make healthy choices about what they eat and drink, as meals are made from freshly prepared, organic ingredients. The children receive a very good range of healthy and wholesome meals, such as rice, soy sauce, cubed cheese, carrots, spring onions and apple. Fresh drinking water is also available. The children are also encouraged to try new foods and are praised for doing so. Planned activities, such as growing and harvesting vegetables and making and eating soup, also introduces the children to healthy ingredients.

The children have a positive approach to learning and are very keen to participate in activities. They are making good progress in their learning and development. The children are fully aware of the daily and weekly routines, as a result, the children feel secure and relaxed in the kindergarten. They are successfully developing various self help skills, for example, the children take it in turns to set the table for lunch, serve the food and clear away and wash up the dirty dishes.

Seasonal and religious activities are planned for and celebrated during the year, such as harvest festival and Christmas. As part of the Christmas celebrations, the parents are invited into the kindergarten to help celebrate the advent spiral. For example, the children dress up in gold crowns, listen to the story of Christmas, take it in turns to light a candle and join in with singing Christmas songs and rhymes. Some of the parents and committee join in with the singing and play musical instruments to accompany the celebrations. Additional activities are also planned to reflect the children's current interests, such as knights. As a result, the children are given the opportunity to make swords and shields.

The staff are very skilful at extending the children's vocabulary through story telling, rhymes and singing. They have also introduced the children to other languages. For example, the children enjoy singing the good morning song and can say good morning in many different languages. The children are developing a very positive attitude to others. This is because the children enjoy playing with resources, which reflect positive images, such as dressing up clothes and dolls. They listen to stories associated with other cultures, such as the story of Rama and Sita. The staff are good role models and as a result, all the children are well behaved. For example, they enthusiastically cooperate with routines. The children are very independent and more able children show care and concern for others, as they help the younger children put on their outdoor clothes.

## Annex A: record of inspection judgements

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

### The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	2

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met