

Gilah Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

Kelly Eyre

Setting address

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Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

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Description of the setting

Gilah Nursery School opened in 1980 and is an Orthodox Jewish nursery managed by a governing committee of parents, the Rabbi and members of the Synagogue. The setting has sole use of five rooms within two buildings of the Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue, Hertfordshire. The setting is accessible to all children and there are two fully enclosed outdoor play areas.

The setting provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. It is open each weekday during termtime only. There are a variety of sessions: children aged two have sessions from 9am to 12 noon, funded three- and four-year-olds have sessions on Monday to Thursday from 9.15am to 12.30pm and on Fridays from 9am to 12.15pm. There is also a lunch club for all children and this runs for two hours from the end of the morning session. The Gilah Building is open on Monday to Thursday from 9.15am to 12.30pm, on Friday from 9.15am to 12.15pm, and for a breakfast club for all children from 8am to the beginning of morning sessions. Children may attend for a variety of sessions.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 95 places and there are currently 85 children on roll within this age group. The setting serves a wide catchment area. A small number of children attend other settings, such as local nurseries and childminders. The setting currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The setting employs 25 members of childcare staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications at Level 2, and 10 at Level 3 or above. One staff member is currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards accreditation.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

All children are highly respected as individuals and are supported in developing a positive sense of self. They make excellent progress in all areas of learning and staff support them to ensure that their needs are met and they can participate meaningfully in all activities. The honest evaluation of every area of their work enables the manager and staff to build a comprehensive overview of this and develop practical action plans, thereby providing a service which is highly responsive to the needs of children and their families. Competent, skilled staff confidently implement thorough assessment and planning procedures to ensure that children are offered a wealth of activities that accurately reflect their interests and developmental needs. Highly effective partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals ensure that individual children's needs are met and their welfare is always promoted.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- developing further the consistent access to outdoor play opportunities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting's highly effective safeguarding procedures mean that children's well-being is significantly enhanced and their welfare is consistently promoted. All staff have attended relevant training and there are stringent procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on all areas and mean that children's safety is consistently promoted. Children are gaining an excellent understanding of safety issues. For example, they learn about road safety, and this is gently reinforced through associated role play, stories and a visit from the local police.

The manager demonstrates a genuine warmth and enthusiasm for her work and is successful in inspiring all staff to maintain high standards. The conscientious evaluation of activities, resources and the play areas enables the setting to develop well-targeted action plans. These are based on feedback from staff, parents and children and mean that changes are appropriately prioritised and lead to improvements in the outcomes for children. Recent changes include the re-organisation of snack time in order to meet the needs of the different age groups. Respect for the individual and the promotion of equality are central to all areas of work. For example, policies and daily procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that they reflect children's current needs. Staff work closely with parents and ensure that they fully understand each child's needs, actively using this information to inform activity planning. Good use is made of all resources in order to promote children's development. For example, each base room is well set out and frequently changed according to children's needs and interests. The outdoor play space is used well in order to provide an extended range of play opportunities. Children also participate in specialist activities, such as weekly gym sessions, and enjoy using the local parks and shops. However, staff do not consistently make optimum use of outdoor resources to offer children a fully extended range of opportunities.

Staff pay attention to building and maintaining excellent partnerships with parents and carers. They use a variety of communication methods to ensure that parents are well informed of their children's progress and activities. For example, there are regular electronic and paper newsletters and opportunities to meet with children's keyworkers to share and update their assessment records. Staff also provide practical information on ways in which parents and carers can support their child's learning at home. The setting has very good procedures for liaising with other professionals. For example, some children also attend other nurseries and childminders, and staff exchange information with them in order to ensure continuity of care and further promote children's development.

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

Children make excellent progress as staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They combine this with their knowledge of the Jewish religion and of the individual children to ensure that children are offered a well-balanced range of activities and play experiences. Thorough assessment procedures enable staff to feed children's current needs and interests into the overall planning and thereby ensure that children's interest is captured and their individual development is always promoted. Staff confidently encourage children to explore the resources and initiate their play, while offering them sensitive support in their chosen activities. This promotes children's confidence and they are eager to try new activities and play an active part in their own learning. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel safe as they move around the play areas, independently selecting resources and readily including staff in their play and discussions.

Staff's well considered interaction with children helps promote their learning and development. For example, children use a two-sided mirror and note that one side makes them look bigger; a staff member explains that this is a magnifying side, encouraging children to repeat this new vocabulary and to compare the mirror to the magnifying glasses they have been using. Children's development is further promoted as staff are always seeking to extend their play, making good use of any incidental learning opportunities. For example, when younger children sit together for snack time, they discuss the different fruit, naming each item, talking about the colours and deciding which is the biggest. Thoughtful daily procedures promote children's self-esteem and enhance their enjoyment. For example, younger children enjoy circle time, where they greet each other in Hebrew and English and join in enthusiastically as they sing songs that incorporate Jewish beliefs and develop their counting and mathematical skills.

The excellent organisation and thoughtful planning of activities ensures that children's learning is extended. For example, they learn about living things through visits from a specialist worker with animals and enjoy handling and helping to feed animals, such as ducks, goats and sheep. The excellent planning also ensures that all activities are well resourced and, therefore, children gain the maximum benefit from them. For example, children's creativity and problem-solving skills are developed as they make pizzas with the face of the Purim clown; they use items, such as tomatoes, peppers and courgettes to make the features of the clown, going on to examine the seeds in the tomatoes and solve the problem of which vegetables to use to make hats for the clowns. Staff skilfully capture children's attention and make their learning fun. For example, they adapt a traditional story into a puppet show; the children are enthralled as they watch the puppets, going on to discuss the traditional celebrations associated with the story and to sing associated songs.

Children's emotional development is promoted and they gain skills for the future as they develop secure, trusting relationships with staff and with their peers. Their behaviour is exemplary and they show an excellent understanding of the expected

standards of behaviour as they work together and readily share the resources. All children are highly valued as individuals and engage in a wealth of activities that help them to value diversity and understand the cultures and lifestyles of others. For example, children speak Hebrew and English during the session and have learned to say 'hello' in several other languages. Daily practice and specific activities help them learn about their own faith and that of other cultures and countries, for example, through participating in craft activities and researching and comparing traditions. The excellent procedures for working with parents and others mean that children who speak English as an additional language or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are consistently offered highly appropriate support. For example, staff utilise picture prompts and visual timelines to support communication and ensure that all children are able to make choices.

The well-planned provision of resources means that children have many opportunities to learn about the uses of information and communication technology and, therefore, gain further skills for the future. For example, children access appropriate programmes on the computer, use programmable toys and choose which music to put on the compact disc player. Excellent staff interaction means that children enjoy their time at the setting and their learning is extended. For example, children explore wooden blocks, making towers and bridges, before a staff member joins them and encourages them to think whether they can make anything else with the blocks; children decide to make letters of the alphabet and work together to determine which blocks to use and how to lay them out. Children gain a very good awareness of the relevance of a wide range of health practices. For example, they use large play equipment and participate in specialist gym sessions, discussing the effects of exercise on their bodies, such as raised temperatures and increased heart rates.

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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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