

St John's Little Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	19/07/2011
Inspector	Anna Davies

Setting address	St. Johns C of E Primary School, Sallowbush Road, HUNTINGDON, Cambridgeshire, PE29 7LA
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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 John's Little Learners opened in 2004 and re-registered in 2010. It is now managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents and interested professionals and has charitable status. The setting is a satellite of the Huntingdon Town Children's Centre and operates from a purpose-built building in the grounds of St John's School in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Children use one main group room, with a smaller room for sleeping. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. Opening times are from 8am until 6pm each weekday all year round, with the exception of public holidays. On Saturdays the centre operates an additional supervised session especially for fathers and their children.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register to provide care for no more than 26 children at any one time. There are currently 58 children in the early years age range on roll. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as children who speak English as an additional language.

There are eight members of staff. The manager and deputy manager both hold a level 4 qualification. Five other staff hold a level 3 qualification and one holds a level 5 qualification. The manager is working towards a level 5 qualification. The setting provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children make rapid progress in their learning and development given their age, ability and starting points, and are very active, enthusiastic and eager learners. This nursery is an exceptionally safe, secure, stimulating and well-resourced place to be for the children who attend. Inclusion of all children and their families is given utmost priority and very effective partnership working with parents, other providers, outside agencies and professionals greatly contributes to this highly inclusive setting. The manager and staff communicate clear ambition and drive and continuously strive to develop and improve outcomes for children using in-depth and rigorous systems of self-evaluation.

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 ways to encourage children to see, hear and use their home language in their play and learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Safeguarding children is given utmost priority. Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure that all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of safeguarding procedures, their duty to report any concerns and the way that they do this. The manager has a clear understanding about her duty towards ensuring staff's ongoing suitability. For example, regular appraisals and supervisions are undertaken and training needs are promptly identified. Comprehensive risk assessment processes ensure that the setting is a safe place for children. An extensive range of documentation, policies and procedures are in place and all are implemented effectively to exceptionally promote children's welfare and safety.

This is a highly inclusive setting. There are excellent systems and partnership working in place which ensure that those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are very well supported and making rapid progress given their starting points. There is a total commitment towards ensuring equal opportunities for all children and their families. The setting is working hard and striving to ensure that any discrepancies in the achievement of different groups of children are identified and addressed. The staff team are highly skilled, qualified and committed. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are actively encouraged to play key roles within the setting and to actively contribute towards any future developments. The key person system is highly effective and children build strong bonds with all adults caring for them. Key persons have an excellent knowledge of their key children and their individual care and learning needs. Staff have strived to organise the setting so that all children can be cared for together, while still ensuring that all children's needs are exceptionally well met. This has been extremely successful and gives the setting a real 'family feel' where children show a very high level of care and consideration for each other across the different age ranges.

The setting has a wide range of excellent quality resources which are all stored at child height in labelled boxes or trolleys in a well-organised play space. This enables children to make many independent choices in their play. Opportunities for learning outdoors are exceptional and this has been vastly enhanced since the re-registration of the setting. Children thoroughly enjoy a wealth of exciting and innovative activities which not only challenge them physically but cover all areas of learning. Children play outside all year round, for example, proudly exclaiming 'I don't want to get wet, I'll get my umbrella' before going out in the rain to splash in puddles. Excellent partnership working with parents, carers, other professionals, outside agencies and other settings underpins the very high quality of consistent care and support provided to the children and families who use this setting. Parents have access to a wealth of information about the setting and other local services. They have many opportunities to become involved in their child's learning. For example, the setting runs a session on Saturdays for fathers and their young children, parents get involved in the creation and upkeep of a vegetable patch which helps their children to learn about growing and tending to plants, fruit

and vegetables, and are invited into the setting to share skills, such as cooking and storytelling. Parents are encouraged to contribute what they know about their child's learning at home and have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress and development. Parents speak very highly of the setting and staff. Recent questionnaire responses offer very positive feedback, one commenting 'I don't think you can improve on perfection'.

The setting's organisation is highly effective in embedding ambition and driving improvement. The manager and staff communicate an extremely clear vision and commitment towards continually improving and providing exceptional quality childcare and education. Through their excellent partnership working with the local authority advisors and other professionals, they continually strive to improve outcomes for children. Systems of self-evaluation are rigorous, involving all staff's, parents' and children's views. This ensures that the staff and manager have an excellent understanding of the setting's strengths and areas for development, pertinent to its users. For example, they have identified and are in the process of developing further ways for children who speak English as an additional language to see, hear and use their home language within the setting. Ideas and information gained from training initiatives are well used and implemented in order to improve outcomes for children. For example, the manager has recently returned from Denmark where she took a closer look at 'Forest Schools'. This trip has led to the hugely successful enrichment of the outdoor space at this setting.

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

Staff support, extend and challenge children's learning exceptionally well through highly effective questioning and skilled use of spontaneous opportunities that arise. For example, they introduce balloon pumps and encourage children to try to use these for themselves and to understand what is happening as the air inflates the balloon. During another activity, children blow down lengths of hosepipe and staff ask them what causes the bubbles at the other end in the water. This promotes discussion about the air and how it travels down the pipe, demonstrating that children have high levels of curiosity and understand cause and effect. Observation and assessment systems are robust and very well established. Planning focuses implicitly on children's interests and next steps, which ensures that children build on what they already know and enjoy, therefore making excellent progress in their learning.

All children show an extremely strong sense of security and belonging within the setting. They demonstrate high levels of confidence, self-esteem and independence, for example, serving their own food, filling their own water trays with the hose pipe, seeing to their own physical needs and initiating conversations with familiar adults and visitors. Children understand that they are completely valued, listened to and respected and, in turn, treat others in the same way. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to appreciate and respect the diversity of languages spoken by their peers. Children play a full and active role in their learning, show great curiosity and the desire to explore and are inquisitive learners. They have a wide range of opportunities to mark make and write for

purpose, both in the indoor and outdoor environments. Staff focus on letters and sounds, and children show a strong understanding as they use different sounds to describe the noises that different forms of transport make. Children are confident in their use of a computer, ably moving the mouse and keys to make onscreen selections. They can also confidently find the letters that make up their name on the keyboard. Staff promote discussion at any given opportunity, inviting children's ideas, comments and views; this gives children lots of opportunities to use their expressive language skills. As staff read stories to children, they are careful to describe new words, such as 'choppy', so that children can begin to understand and use new vocabulary. Staff are highly skilled at encouraging children to think for themselves and solve simple problems; they pose questions, discuss possible solutions and play lots of games, such as picture lotto, that encourage independent thinking. Children confidently use number language and methods of calculation throughout their play, for example, saying 'I've got seven races to do so just one more race to go'. Children are very much part of the local community and regular visits to the local shops, parks and community centre and walks helps children to have a sense of place and belonging. A wide range of resources and activities provide experiences that broaden children's understanding of the wider world. For example, many visitors are invited into the setting, such as the 'life bus', children's first aid trainers and emergency services. All of these activities equip children with an excellent level of fundamental skills for the future.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities to encourage and challenge their physical skills. They free-flow between the indoor and outdoor environments, for example, enjoying riding their bikes and scooters brought in from home and designing a roadway and petrol pump to support their play. Children show high levels of perseverance at activities, such as balancing and coordinating their body on the spinning disc and throwing and catching balloons, using excellent hand-eye coordination given their age. Older children engage in weekly physical education sessions in the adjacent school hall. They fully understand about the benefits of physical activity and embrace these activities. Children's creativity is fully supported by staff. Children thoroughly enjoy 'superhero' play and dressing up. They have lots of opportunities to investigate and explore different materials through resource trolleys and messy play activities. They draw intricate pictures and ascribe clear meaning to their marks.

All areas of the setting are very clean and hygienic and staff ensure that these standards are maintained throughout the day. Children show an exceptional understanding of the importance of following good personal hygiene routines. Meals and snacks are extremely nutritious and well balanced. Food is beautifully presented and children are encouraged to serve themselves and to try new foods. Children fully understand how healthy eating contributes towards their growth and development, spontaneously commenting 'If I eat all of my dinner I will be like a giant'. Meal and snack times are lovely, social occasions where children and staff enjoy and engage in meaningful discussion. Records relating to medication and accidents are very well maintained. Records of accidents are closely monitored and analysed on a monthly basis to support changes to policy and procedures. All children show a strong sense of security and feel safe within the setting. They show an excellent understanding of what standards of behaviour are expected and apply these in order to keep themselves and others safe. For example, when a

balloon pops they spontaneously go and find the pieces 'because a baby might get them'. Children are able to confidently talk about their feelings and understand who they can turn to for support or reassurance. Children are encouraged to take risks but fully understand how to do so in a manner that is safe for themselves and others. Children's behaviour is exemplary. The setting is a very harmonious environment where children receive lots of individual adult attention and enjoy a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities, supported by staff who are excellent role models.

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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