

The Kindergarten at St Joseph's Limited

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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*.

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Description of the setting

The Kindergarten at St. Joseph's Limited registered in 2011 under new ownership. It operates from a self-contained unit in the grounds of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Epsom, close to the town centre. Children have access to three adjoining playrooms and an enclosed garden for outside play.

The kindergarten serves the local community. It is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 40 children at any one time in the early years age group. The kindergarten is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early education for children aged three and four years. There are currently 104 children on roll between the ages of two years six months and the end of the early years age group. Staff support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The kindergarten operates Monday to Friday during term time only, with sessions from 9am to 12 noon. Afternoon sessions run from 12.35pm to 3.05pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The kindergarten employs 12 members of staff who work with the children, including the owner/manager who has been awarded Early Years Professional Status. Nine members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 3 and above.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The kindergarten offers children an enjoyable and predominantly positive early years experience. Practitioners carefully meet children's individual welfare needs by working closely with parents and carers. They support children in making good progress in most areas of learning and gaining important skills for the future. Staff conduct thorough monitoring of practice and they successfully target areas for further development. This means that the kindergarten is well placed to maintain effective continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- strengthen opportunities for children to build on their independence, for example by involving them in the preparation of food or to use number as part of their everyday experiences
- improve children's independent access to resources that incorporate

technology

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Practitioners implement effective measures to safeguard children and update their knowledge through training. They have a secure understanding of child protection issues and the procedure to follow if they have any concerns. Daily checks and comprehensive use of risk assessment means that sensible measures are in place to identify and minimise potential hazards. Consequently, children play in a safe and secure environment. The registered owner implements robust recruitment, vetting and induction systems to assess the suitability of practitioners. All required documentation is in place and comprehensive policies and procedures underpin and inform practice. Staff and parents all have a clear idea about the organisation of the kindergarten through effective sharing of information.

The owner demonstrates drive and ambition and speaks highly of the staff team working with her. They are equally positive, indicating that they feel involved and consulted. They meet regularly to discuss practice issues and have specific areas of responsibility, which encourages a sense of ownership. For instance, one individual has developed a book about the kindergarten for parents to use with their children to aid the settling-in process. The owner has introduced parent group meetings to share information and encourage their input and suggestions. Self-evaluation is ongoing and is as an effective tool to identify and plan for further improvement. For example, the outdoor play area is developing to extend learning opportunities across all areas.

The premises are spacious and welcoming. Children see their artwork displayed alongside photographs of themselves at play, which adds to their sense of belonging. For the majority of the session, children move freely between the playrooms, which are set up to offer different types of activity. A free-flow approach to outdoor play is also on offer and many children clearly enjoy being outdoors. Children independently access a mostly good range of resources and they are encouraged to decide what they would like out on tables that are deliberately left empty. There is an interesting variety of resources to encourage children's awareness of technology and science. However, these are not readily available as part of the continuous provision. This does not maximise learning opportunities.

Parents indicate confirm how pleased they are with the care their children receive. They find practitioners approachable and friendly and comment favourably on the methods used to keep them informed. Parents receive a weekly newsletter by email and a copy of the planning. Practitioners also complete a communication book, which offers details of how children spend their time. Parents receive details of the half-termly learning targets that key persons set for children. Further systems to encourage parental input are emerging, for instance by providing them with observation sheets and encouraging them to add their thoughts on their child's development. Practitioners establish effective partnerships with other

professionals and some early years settings that children also attend. This benefits children as there is a shared approach to promoting their care and education. Staff use their links to provide good support to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Practitioners gather detailed information about children's individual needs and interests. They help them learn about diversity through activities, resources and the display of positive images. The kindergarten benefits from a richness of culture and language amongst the children and families using it. Practitioners provide support for children who speak English as an additional language. They are developing use of labelling within the environment so that this reflects children's home languages.

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

Children are happy and settled in their surroundings and in the company of the practitioners caring for them. Warm, friendly relationships are clearly evident. Children enjoy their play and remain involved as they follow their interests. The provision of some tyres and wooden planks and blocks enable children to be physically active and explore problem solving in interesting ways. Some children create obstacle courses and try to balance as they walk across these. Others investigate rolling balls and pouring water down planks placed at an angle. For others, these materials become a boat. Imaginative play is really popular. Young children enjoy playing in the home corner while others act out rescue stories using favourite super hero toys. Several children remain engrossed for sustained lengths of time making paper chains as decorations for their forthcoming Jubilee party.

Children incorporate mathematical language into their play as they talk about size and measurement and they count confidently. Older children are competent communicators and this generates a buzz of conversation throughout the session. Practitioners encourage younger children who are quieter to chat, which enables them to express their needs and feelings in words. Children are introduced to letters and sounds through everyday routines. As a result, they confidently recognise their name card at snack time. They use a variety of mark-making resources such as paintbrushes, crayons and one-handed tools with the sand and dough, which promotes their emerging writing skills. Children are supported in developing an awareness of change. For example, they delight in pouring buckets of water into the sand tray and investigating the wet sand. They note that it feels 'cold like ice' and that it 'drips down' and 'looks like a waterfall' when they pick it up in their fingers. Some children demonstrate an understanding of the effects of the sun as they explain that sand will dry if it is in the sunshine. They explain that the fence panels they have painted with water will change colour once the sun dries them. Children are encouraged to be independent as they pour drinks and serve themselves food at snack time. However, opportunities to develop this further, for example by inviting children to help prepare the fruit, are missed. Most

practitioners are effective at using their engagement with children to ask questions, which encourage them to think critically. For instance, children listen intently as practitioners read to them. They are encouraged to recall what happened in the story and to express their views. However, on some occasions practitioners do not fully exploit all opportunities to encourage children to use numbers. Practitioners use observational assessment effectively to monitor children's progress and plan for the next steps in their learning. Effective planning systems are in place.

Many children demonstrate that they know how to keep themselves healthy. They understand when and why they need to wash their hands. Several children fetch their sun hats before they go outside to play in the sunshine. Parents contribute fruit for everyone to share at snack time. This promotes a collective approach to promoting healthy eating. Fresh drinking water is freely available, inside and outside. Staff supervise children carefully but allow them to take some risks in their play. For example, children sensibly use the planks and wooden blocks. Children demonstrate safety awareness as they explain that they should not run indoors or they might fall and hurt themselves.

Children's behaviour is mostly very good. They help decide on rules for good playing and explain that they need to 'play nicely' and to say sorry. Older children successfully negotiate with one another and take turns while practitioners provide sensitive support for younger children who are learning these skills. They explain about the need for 'kind words' and comment on 'good sharing' when this occurs. This approach reinforces expectations and helps children appreciate the feelings and wishes of others. Practitioners give children lots of praise and encouragement, which fosters their self-esteem and confidence effectively.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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