

Inspection of The Valley Kindergarten

The Sunday School, Church Bank Lane, Cragg Vale, West Yorkshire HX7 5TF

Inspection date: 9 March 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The kindergarten is a hive of activity. Children concentrate well on tasks and are curious and eager to learn. They work collaboratively as they come across different challenges. Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of the children's capabilities. The curriculum is ambitious and builds on children's existing knowledge and skills. Staff ensure that children have plenty of opportunity to consolidate their learning and deepen their knowledge.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, when children were unable to attend, staff made sure they kept in touch with families. Staff delivered stories virtually to the children and shared examples of activities families could do at home.

Children behave well and are kind and considerate towards their peers. Staff actively encourage children to gain an understanding of how their behaviour impacts on others. They encourage children to value everyone's contribution and to listen to one another. Staff know when to stand back and allow children time and space to resolve their own disputes, as well as when to offer guidance.

Children learn about healthy eating and do lots of baking. They help to prepare healthy soups for their lunch by chopping the potatoes and baking their own bread. They carefully use a range of tools and show a good awareness of how to safely hold the potato in relation to the knife when chopping.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The curriculum is well planned. Staff encourage children to follow their interests and test out their ideas. Staff are there to offer support and bring in key skills to the learning experience, as identified in children's individual learning plans.
- Children are independent and have good levels of confidence. They use language well to describe what they are doing and to outline their intentions. Staff engage in lots of dialogue with children. They ask children what is happening and why and what might happen next. The kindergarten manager understands how to effectively support children's developing communication and language. She follows agreed approaches, repeating any unclear words back to children, which enables them to learn the correct pronunciation of words. However, this approach is not always consistently used by all staff.
- Children learn about number and quantity as they make their own dough. They count the number of children and use a 'sharing knife' to portion out the dough so each child gets an equal share.
- During activities, children regularly talk about what they see and observe change. When making dough, they observe the mixture is 'too dry' and suggest adding more water. However, they soon realise all the water is still at the

bottom and decide they need to stir it first then check again. They talk about the consistency as it changes from 'dry' to 'sticky' and 'smooth' once it is flattened and rolled.

- Children work together to solve problems and persevere well on self-chosen challenges. Children work collaboratively together to make a 'worm house'. They persist for long periods, carefully resting small planks of wood against one another. They communicate effectively throughout, suggesting 'pull yours back' and 'go forward a little'.
- Staff achieve a good balance between keeping children safe and encouraging them to take measured risks during physical activities. This helps children to grow in confidence and understand their capabilities and safe limits. For example, children challenge themselves to walk on stilts down a small step. They show good balance, steadying themselves before stepping down.
- Overall, leaders and managers have a good measure of the quality of their provision. Staff are supported and actively encouraged to attend regular training. The staff team work well together and regularly meet to discuss the curriculum, what they plan to do next and how this will benefit all children. However, time is not consistently built in to allow managers the opportunity to step back and reflect on the quality of teaching, to build on the existing good practice.
- Staff work effectively in partnership with parents. Staff talk to parents to get a picture of children's existing skills to then build on. Parents report that they get regular feedback on their children's progress and describe how well their children are developing across all areas of learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Staff complete regular training and have an up-to-date knowledge of local procedures for reporting any concerns. Discussions around potential child protection scenarios help staff to consider what action they would take, in line with the safeguarding policy.

Risk assessments are effective in minimising risks to children. Staff deployment is effective in ensuring that children are safely supervised and well supported. Gentle reminders from staff help children to develop an awareness of how to stay safe. For example, staff remind children to keep all four legs of their chair on the floor and the reasons for this.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- support all staff to consistently use agreed approaches to remodel children's mispronounced words, to further support children's developing communication and language skills
- improve evaluations of teaching practice so that areas for further improvement are consistently identified to build on the existing good practice.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY384056
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10212784
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	3 to 5
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	14
Name of registered person	Calder Valley Steiner Education Ltd.
Registered person unique reference number	RP527037
Telephone number	01422 885249
Date of previous inspection	14 December 2010

Information about this early years setting

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.

Calder Valley Steiner Kindergarten (formally 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. The children have access to the willow kindergarten room, which is situated on the ground 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 provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. The setting is open five days a week from 9am until 3pm during 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 four staff, one of whom is Steiner trained and all have qualifications at level 3 and above.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Annette Stanger

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the provider received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager showed the inspector the premises and discussed how they ensure that it is safe and suitable.
- The manager joined the inspector on a learning walk and talked to the inspector about their curriculum and what they want their children to learn.
- The inspector spoke to children to find out about their time at the setting.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated individual about the leadership and management of the setting.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector observed the interactions between staff and the children.
- The kindergarten teacher and the inspector carried out a joint observation of a small group activity.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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