

Inspection of St James Pre-school

St James Hall, St James Avenue, Beckenham, Kent BR3 4HF

Inspection date: 25 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not applicable

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children and their families receive a warm welcome at this nurturing pre-school. Staff are caring and attentive to children, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Staff consider children's interests as they plan the activities, which engages children and motivates them to learn. For example, children are fascinated by the growth of spring flowers. Staff provide a range of art and craft materials to help them represent their ideas. This sparks the children's creativity. They concentrate intently as they carefully select and shape materials to make wonderful drawings and collages.

The manager and staff want all children to achieve highly. Staff promptly recognise when children need additional support with their learning or development. They work closely with parents and other professionals to provide targeted interventions. The manager ensures that additional funding is used effectively, to benefit the children who receive it. This helps all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress.

Staff are positive role models. They teach children to be kind and to use good manners. There is a strong emphasis on promoting children's independence. For instance, children learn to manage their own hygiene and personal care. This helps to boost their self-esteem. Children are proud to show that they can carry out tasks, such as washing their hands independently.

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

- The manager and staff provide a broad and well-sequenced curriculum, to help prepare children for school and later life. For instance, they introduce children to a wide range of stories and factual books, to enhance their enjoyment and understanding of nursery topics. This promotes a love of books, which helps to support children's early literacy.
- Staff use playful ways to introduce children to mathematical concepts. For example, as children make 'cakes' from dough, staff encourage them to calculate how many will be left when one is taken away. They help children to record their findings by making marks on paper. Children display their understanding of numbers and measurements as they count the toy dinosaurs and order them from biggest to smallest.
- Generally, the quality of teaching is good. For example, staff sing, read and talk with children throughout the day, which promotes their language development well. However, staff do not always consider children's ages and abilities when delivering large-group activities. Therefore, some children become distracted and lose interest.
- Staff promote healthy lifestyles for children. They provide nutritious snacks and

advise parents on healthy options for children's packed lunches. This encourages children to enjoy a wider variety of healthy foods. Staff offer a good range of learning experiences outdoors each day, which inspire children to be physically active. For instance, children dig, carry and stir large pots of soil as they 'cook' in their mud kitchen.

- Staff are patient and consistent with managing children's behaviour, such as coming down to children's eye level to explain the expectations to them. This promotes a relaxed and calm atmosphere, which helps children to concentrate on their learning. Children behave well and show a good understanding of the boundaries in place. For example, older children remind each other that they must share the toys and use their 'walking feet' indoors.
- Staff celebrate what makes children unique. For example, they encourage children to be original with their artwork and admire everyone's efforts with equal enthusiasm. This helps children to feel valued and to develop a sense of belonging.
- Staff appreciate the support they receive from the manager and other colleagues and comment on the strong sense of teamwork. They receive regular supervision sessions and training, to enhance their professional practice and help them to safeguard children. New staff go through robust vetting and induction procedures to check their suitability and help them fulfil their roles.
- There are effective partnerships with parents and other professionals. Parents describe how staff help them through difficult times and provide personalised care and learning for children. They report that their children have developed their confidence and communication skills since joining the pre-school. Staff work with local schools to support successful transitions for all children when they move on.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to plan and deliver group activities more effectively, to help children remain focused and engaged in learning.

Setting details

Unique reference number	2666727
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10335265
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	68
Number of children on roll	85
Name of registered person	Gray Pre-schools Ltd
Registered person unique reference number	2652704
Telephone number	020 8289 8386
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable

Information about this early years setting

St James Pre-school re-registered in 2024. The provision operates Monday to Friday from 9am to 3.15pm, during term times only. Sessions run from 9am to 12.10pm and from 12.10pm to 3.15pm. The provider employs ten members of staff, nine of whom hold a childcare qualification at level 3 or level 2. The provision offers funded early education for children aged two, three and four years.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Sarah Crawford

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 this into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The manager showed the inspector around the premises, she explained how they organise the environment and learning programmes for children.
- The inspector observed activities and interactions between children and staff, to help evaluate the quality of the education. This includes a joint observation with the manager.
- Parents, staff and children shared their views and experiences with the inspector at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The manager met with the inspector to discuss leadership issues, such as staff recruitment and training. She ensured that relevant documents were available for the inspector to view.

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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