

Inspection of St John's Playgroup

St. Johns Church Hall, Bilton Lane, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 3DT

Inspection date: 2 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is outstanding

Children are extremely happy at this pre-school. The manager ensures that children's safety is a top priority. Children demonstrate they feel safe and are confident to talk to the inspector. There is a robust, yet flexible, settling-in process for children. This means that sessions suit individual children's needs. The pre-school offers home visits to parents. These are extremely beneficial and help children to settle in quickly. Staff skilfully build on what they observe children playing with at home. They set up similar activities at pre-school. This further supports the transition between home and pre-school.

There is a clear key-person system in place. Staff know their key children exceptionally well and how to support any possible gaps in learning. They have high expectations of what they want children to learn and of children's behaviour. This helps all children to make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Experienced staff teach children to care for living things, such as plants and pets. They engage in meaningful discussions with children and support them to solve problems for themselves. Children become engaged in activities for extended periods of time. For example, children become excited about the prospect of seeing 'Pirate Pete'. He has been brought to life through activities and stories. These activities develop children's imagination and problem-solving skills.

The way in which the pre-school staff support children to explore their feelings is exceptional. Caring staff explore a range of feelings and emotions with each child. Children talk about how they are feeling throughout the day and move their photo around a mood board. Their feelings are explored in more detail. For example, staff ask children why they might feel a certain way.

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

- The way in which staff support the development of children's self-esteem and respect for others is inspiring. For example, staff celebrate achievements throughout the day by providing children with 'wow' moment slips. Children proudly display these on a board and share their achievements with their friends at the end of each session. This makes children immensely proud. Children take care of the resources and help to tidy up.
- Pre-school staff support children's love of reading in a range of ways. They read stories enthusiastically to ensure that children remain engaged. Stories are brought to life by a range of other activities. The enthusiastic and dedicated manager records a video of herself reading the 'book of the week'. This is shared with families through an online app for children to enjoy at home. This further supports links between pre-school and home and supports parents to enjoy

stories with their children.

- There is a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language. For instance, the pre-school has a travelling bear. Parents are encouraged to support their child to tell a story about the bear using the pre-school's 'words of the week'. This further extends children's vocabulary and puts new words into context.
- Mathematical language is skilfully embedded through a range of activities. Children go on a treasure hunt to find coins. Staff talk about the numbers on each of the coins. They use language to support them to look for the coins. For example, they need to look 'under' and 'over' objects. This supports children's understanding of positional language.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is passionate about her role. She has attended training to ensure she is able to support all children. Any developmental concerns are raised promptly with the relevant professionals. The SENCo goes above and beyond her role to support parents with referral forms to ensure that children receive additional support and funding in a timely manner. Additional funding the pre-school receives is used effectively. This helps children with SEND to make good progress.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the pre-school. They praise the warm and welcoming staff. Parents value the stay-and-play sessions which are provided for them. This gives them an opportunity to be more involved with the pre-school and to understand the learning which is taking place. Parents recommend the pre-school to other parents within the community. They are kept up to date with their child's development and feel their children are well prepared for their next stage of learning, such as school.
- The highly skilled staff team feels very well supported by the leadership team. Staff access a range of carefully planned training to support them further in their own roles. The management team is reflective and constantly looking at ways it can further develop and support staff. This ensures that staff remain up to date with industry changes, and morale among the team is high. This has a positive impact on children's achievements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

Setting details

Unique reference number	400351
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10335733
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	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	38
Name of registered person	St John's Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP518699
Telephone number	07931987665
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2018

Information about this early years setting

St John's Playgroup registered in 1992 and is located in Harrogate. The pre-school employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification at level 6, one holds early years teacher status, three hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two are unqualified. The pre-school opens from Monday to Friday, term time only. The pre-school is open from Monday to Thursday from 9am till 3pm, and on Friday from 9am till 12.30pm. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Amy Whiting

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 inspector viewed the provision and discussed the safety and suitability of the premises.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the pre-school and discussed the early years curriculum.
- Children spoke with the inspector during the inspection.
- 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 pre-school.
- The SENCo spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.
- 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 the staff and children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation of an activity with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the pre-school.

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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