

Inspection of St James' Pre-School

171 Fortis Green Road, LONDON N10 3BG

Inspection date: 18 June 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 Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

The dedicated manager and her equally committed team welcome children warmly into an exciting and inviting play environment. They work hard and invest time in getting to know the children and their families before children attend. The qualified and experienced team ensure children make good progress. The quality of teaching is good. The nurturing and attentive staff plan a challenging and ambitious curriculum around the children's interests. They build on what children already know and what they need to learn next. Children demonstrate they are curious and keen to try new things. Staff plan many opportunities for children to explore sensory resources and support them to challenge themselves through their play. Staff are good role models. They encourage children to be kind, safe and helpful. This underpins how children are supported in regulating their own emotions and behaviours. Children's behaviour is good.

The staff ensure the pre-school is fully inclusive and resources are easily accessible to help children initiate their own play. The well-planned activities help children to learn how to take care of themselves and how to stay safe. For example, children play cooperatively in the role-play kitchen. They write shopping lists and talk about wearing oven gloves to avoid their hands getting burnt. Staff teach children about the importance of road safety when on outings. Staff provide children with opportunities to learn the skills they need for the transition to school and future successful learning.

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

- Staff implement a broad curriculum that covers all areas of learning. They plan a broad range of activities for all children, taking into account their interests and the knowledge and skills they need to learn next. Children enjoy developing their fine motor skills as they manipulate clay into different shapes using their fingers. Staff encourage them to practise squeezing, rolling and cutting the clay and adding a variety of materials to it.
- There is a strong focus on developing the skills children need to be independent learners. This includes managing their own feelings. Children are good communicators and show they feel emotionally secure. Staff help children to discuss their emotions and teach them a variety of language to explain how they feel. They support them to negotiate with their friends and understand what sharing means. Staff recognise the importance of these skills to ensure a smooth transition to school.
- Overall, staff encourage children's counting and number skills and help them to problem-solve throughout their play. For instance, while children build an imaginary train from tyres, staff ask children to count the number of seats and to explain how many people will fit in their train. Young children create patterns

with coloured pegs and board. However, staff do not always capture these learning opportunities to introduce mathematical language or concepts, such as patterns or shapes, to build on what children already know.

- In the main, staff support children's communication and language. For example, while children make concoctions with coloured water and fresh herbs from their garden, staff have purposeful discussions with them during their play. They explain and identify key words, such as 'lavender' and 'rosemary'. However, at times, when staff join in with children's play, they sometimes ask several questions and offer children the answers, without pausing to allow children time to respond. This does not always allow children to have opportunities to think and share their thoughts and ideas.
- Staff talk to children about what food is good for them during snack time and how they can keep their bodies healthy. They provide many opportunities for children to practise their physical skills, such as balancing on small beams and catching balls in the large hall. Staff help children learn the importance of good hygiene. For instance, they explain that they need to wash their hands so they do not have any germs.
- The manager continuously evaluates staff practice and what it is like for a child at the pre-school. She promotes an ethos of all staff working as a team and works closely with staff to help them adapt their practice to meet all children's needs. Staff meet regularly to identify training needs. They agree on support and professional development that have a positive impact on children's experiences.
- Partnership with parents and carers is extremely positive. Staff provide parents with support and advice, which parents value. Parents feel involved in their children's developmental journey. They speak positively about how staff's communication is thorough and comment on how reassured they are leaving their children in the care of the pre-school staff.

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:

- strengthen the curriculum for mathematics, providing children with more opportunities to explore size, patterns and mathematical language
- support staff to engage with children more effectively during child-led play, such as by giving children more time to respond to questions before providing the answer and moving on.

Setting details

Unique reference number	140458
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	10351461
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	30
Number of children on roll	32
Name of registered person	St James' Pre-School Muswell Hill Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP517513
Telephone number	0208 4444033
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2018

Information about this early years setting

St James' Pre-School registered in 1998. It operates from Birchwood Hall in Muswell Hill, in the London Borough of Haringey. The pre-school is open from 8.30am to 4pm on Monday to Thursday and from 8.30am to 1pm on Friday, during term time only. There are six members of staff, of whom, one holds early years professional status and one holds qualified teacher status. All remaining staff hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Anahita Aderianwalla

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 and the inspector completed a learning walk together and discussed the curriculum and what the team wants the children to learn.
- 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 manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation together.
- The inspector spoke with staff and children at the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents and was provided with written feedback.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and 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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