



Childcare Inspection Report on

St. Joseph`s Playgroup

**St Josephs R C School
Brackley Avenue
Colwyn Bay
LL29 7UU**



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Description of the service

St. Joseph's Playgroup operates from the Nursery playroom within St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Colwyn Bay. It is registered to provide care for up to 30 children under the age of 12. The service is currently open from 13:00p.m. – 15:10p.m. Monday to Friday during term time. The Registered Person is Mr James Wilkinson and the Person in Charge of the day to day management of the service is Mrs Maria Wellings. The service is provided through English however use of incidental Welsh is frequent. This service does not meet the criteria to be offering an 'Active offer' of the Welsh language. The service provides Flying Start places for 2 year old children and early education funded places for 3 year olds (Foundation Phase) it is also inspected by Estyn.

Summary of our findings

1. Overall assessment

Children are happy, are empowered to make choices and have their needs met. They are cared for by staff who are well qualified and experienced in the delivery of childcare and who are committed to securing best outcomes for children in their care. The environment is carefully designed in a way which enables children to develop independence, make choices and play and learn safely. It is laid out in line with the Foundation Phase principles and encourages learning through play. Leadership have a secure understanding of regulatory requirements and have processes in place to ensure compliance with these. Leaders are a visible and active part of the service; they have experience of supporting children with additional needs and working successfully in partnership with other agencies to ensure all children make positive progress.

2. Improvements

Since the last inspection both the Person in Charge and the assistant Person in Charge have successfully completed their Level 5 in Leadership for Children's Care, Learning and Development.

3. Requirements and recommendations

We have made recommendations in relation to leaders giving consideration to further developing infection control auditing and extending the use of natural and sustainable materials within the service.

1. Well-being

Summary

Children feel safe, happy and valued. They are encouraged to participate in group activities and are supported to express their views and opinions. They are learning about friendships and beginning to play well together. They are active, explore and engage in play based activities whilst learning about the world around them and developing their independence.

Our findings

1.1 To what extent do children have a voice?

Children have a voice and are confident their views and ideas are valued.

Children were made to feel valued because all children had the opportunity to participate and be listened to. Children were confident to approach staff and knew their attempts at communication would be listened to because their needs and non-verbal cues took precedence over daily routines. For example, children whose stage of development meant they were not yet ready to sit with the group, were allowed to continue to play quietly nearby. Children were made aware of the options open to them and had time to make free choices when playing.

Children participate well and are encouraged to express their opinions.

1.2 To what extent do children feel safe, happy and valued?

Children cope well with separation from their parents because they feel happy, settled and valued.

All of the children were new to the service and had only attended for two weeks at the time of the inspection. The majority were happy and settled for the duration of the afternoon, confidently moving around the playroom and outdoor play spaces from activity to activity. They were encouraged to take turns during group activities and were learning to show each other respect and listen to each other. The daily routine was becoming increasingly familiar to them. Children were able to identify the week's fairy tale of 'Goldilocks and the three bears' and recognised it would be home time shortly after snack. They were beginning to develop trust and bonds of affection with the staff caring for them and were becoming more familiar with each other, forming friendships and playing alongside one another.

Children gain a strong sense of belonging as their wellbeing is highly valued and respected.

1.3 How well do children interact?

Children interact and co-operate well.

Children listened carefully, lining up when asked and helping to tidy away the toys at the end of each session when they heard the tidy up song. They interacted positively and were respectful when using the toys and equipment, learning to share and take turns. With the support of visual prompts they had the opportunity to express how they were feeling; genuine empathy being modelled by staff and mimicked by their friends helping them to understand and value each other's emotions. They were supported to understand the boundaries and rules of the service and were encouraged and heard to use their manners.

Children experience positive interactions which help them to develop.

1.4 To what extent do children enjoy their play and learning?

Children have fun and are happy.

Children enjoyed the range of play activities available to them, moving freely between the areas of play which interested them. Children persevered for appropriate amounts of time showing curiosity in what their friends were doing and having positive attitudes to try new things. Children participating in a 'free painting' activity enjoyed having the freedom to be creative; painting their hands and using paint brushes to decorate the paper covering the whole table. Children benefitted from the play being well organised with resources and toys being placed out in advance for their immediate use. For example, children were able to mix porridge for the three bears as the mixing bowls, spoons and bears were readily available in the home corner for the children's use.

Children are animated and actively engaged with the play opportunities presented to them.

1.5 How well do children develop, learn and become independent?

Children make progress and are developing their confidence and independence.

Children benefitted from a regular routine which enabled opportunities for them to develop their independence. For example, snack time provided the opportunity for children to learn to wash their hands and begin to develop good hygiene practices they helped to pour their own drinks and chose the fruit they wanted to eat at snack time. Helper of the day was proud to show us their sticker and smiled broadly when afforded, with the assistance of the Person in Charge, the responsibility of feeding the services' new pet fish. Children were developing confidence and learning to do things independently with the security and knowledge that staff were at hand to support them should it be required.

Children are successfully and appropriately challenged to develop their independence.

2. Care and Development

Summary

Staff implement the service's policies well in order to keep children healthy and safe. They set consistent and realistic boundaries for children's behaviour and act as positive role models. Staff plan a wide variety of developmental play activities which are fun for the children. They implement their training well in order to successfully track the children's progress and understand what the children's individual next steps should be.

Our findings

2.1 How well do practitioners keep children safe and healthy?

Staff promote healthy life styles and have a secure understanding of how to keep children safe.

Staff ensured children were offered healthy and nutritional snack and drink options. They ensured opportunities for children to be physically active were an integral part of the day and that these encouraged their physical development, for example push along tricycles, pedal tricycles and push along two wheel bikes were available and encouraged progression. All staff had a relevant child care qualification and had undergone recent paediatric first aid and child protection training. This training was implemented well as we found accident records to be fully completed and signed by parents as acknowledgement of the first aid their child had received. Staff were aware of their responsibilities in relation to fire safety and had procedures in place to familiarise the children with fire evacuation. The staff team had been consistent for a number of years and worked well together to apply safe practice in relation to food preparation and food handling for example, ensuring the fruit provided to the children was cut up into appropriate sizes to promote their safety.

Staff are professional and dedicated in ensuring children are kept safe and healthy.

2.2 How well do practitioners manage interactions?

Staff manage interactions effectively to promote positive behaviour.

Staff were skilful and consistent in their approach to behaviour management. They offered children regular praise for good behaviour which helped make it clear to children what was expected of them and used positive reinforcement to help establish behaviour boundaries. For example, a child running was asked to 'walk nicely please'. Staff modelled behaviours well smiling, making good eye contact with the children to show they were listening and asking 'pardon' respectfully when they had not fully heard what a child asked them. Staff used rewards such as stickers to further celebrate the children's positive interactions, a child receiving recognition and a sticker for sharing well with another child.

Staff enthusiastically celebrate exceptional interactions in order to promote further good interactions.

2.3 How well do practitioners promote children's play, learning and development and meet their individual needs?

Staff have a secure understanding of how to promote children's development in order to meet their individual needs.

Staff are well qualified, confident and relaxed; creating a calm and nurturing environment for the children. Staff had an up to date understanding of child development and the Foundation Phase and implemented this well through the daily routine. They were able to access further training and development to enable them to support children with their individual needs, for example, a member of staff had recently completed training in '*Speech and Support for 0-3's*' which would benefit the age of children being cared for. Staff had delegated responsibilities for example, maintaining the children's development records '*Teddy target books*' and identifying each child's future play and learning targets. A designated member of staff was responsible for writing individual play plans and setting targets for any children with identified with additional needs. There was a good balance between adult led and child initiated play with staff observed to play alongside the children, encouraging language development and positive social interactions. They were skilful and calm in their attempts to distract and engage a child who was unsettled, the development of trust between the new child and the staff becoming gradually more apparent.

Staff are dedicated to planning play opportunities which are fun, engaging and which ensure children make progress.

3. Environment

Summary

Leaders provide an environment which is safe, clean and secure. Facilities promote children's independence and sufficient play space both indoors and outside provides a rich environment for play and learning. Furniture, toys and equipment are suitable for the age of the children and enhance their play experiences.

Our findings

3.1 How well do leaders ensure the safety of the environment?

Leaders fully anticipate children's needs and ensure these are provided for safely.

Procedures were in place to ensure the environment was kept clean, secure and free from unnecessary risks. Risk assessments had been written for the playroom and the outdoor area and these were revised annually to ensure the environment remained safe. Leaders ensured the outdoor area provided children with the opportunity to take supported risks while being active, climbing and developing physically. Observations showed staff were aware of their responsibilities in keeping children safe and were effectively deployed for example, one member of staff stood next to the climbing frame to support children if they needed help and to a keep watchful eye to help prevent accidents. Leaders had appropriate procedures in place to manage cross infection. For example, the member of staff preparing snack did not have responsibility for changing children's nappies during the session. To further enhance this, leaders should consider completing the 'Infection prevention and control for childcare settings' audit tool.

Leaders actively and effectively consider the safety of the environment to ensure it is free from unnecessary risks.

3.2 How well do leaders ensure the suitability of the environment?

Leaders provide secure play areas which are suitable and welcoming and which promote opportunities for children to play and learn.

Leaders ensured children had sufficient play space to facilitate the successful delivery of the Early Years Foundation Phase. Access to the outdoor play space was easily accessible from the main playroom and encouraged free movement between both. Furniture and toileting facilities were appropriately sized and promoted the children's independence. All areas were well maintained and neutrally decorated; colourful displays ensuring the area felt welcoming, child centred and promoted the Welsh language. Leaders used the environment skilfully to create opportunities which enhanced children's well-being, care and development. A dedicated 'sensory room' offered children a quiet space in which they could be calm, rest or participate in quieter activities whereas the outdoor 'stage' provided an opportunity for children to develop their confidence, speaking and performance skills.

Leaders are forward thinking and ensure the suitability of the environment contributes to children's ability to flourish.

3.3 How well do leaders ensure the quality of resources and equipment?

Leaders provide a wide range of good quality resources which are used effectively by staff to ensure positive outcomes for children.

Leaders consider the quality of toys and resources and replace them when deemed necessary. They actively fundraise throughout the year to support the purchase of new equipment and resources for the children. The service benefits from being able to share resources and equipment with the School's nursery class. Outdoors, leaders had started to consider ways in which sustainable and natural resources could be used and a group seating area had been made from logs. Leaders could consider how this may be further extended to other areas of play. Leaders ensured children had independent access to technology which was appropriate for their age and which helped them to develop, for example, one child was programming a Beebot to follow given instructions.

Leaders provide a wide range of good quality resources and equipment.

4. Leadership and Management

Summary

Leaders have a clear vision for the service and have processes in place for ensuring compliance with the Regulations is maintained. They are reflective, set high expectations for themselves and the service and plan for improvements accordingly. Leaders ensure staff are well qualified, experienced and deployed effectively to meet the needs of the children. Leaders involve parents in making decisions about their child's progress to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

Our findings

4.1 How effective is leadership?

Leaders are effective in ensuring the service is operated in accordance with the regulations.

Leaders had clear aims and a vision, which they communicated well and which is focused on the children's care. They supported and challenged staff to do their best, encouraging further training and development if staff wished to pursue this. Leaders ensured their own knowledge of child development was kept up to date by attending regular training and briefing sessions offered by a variety of umbrella bodies. They had established a team of staff who were professional, enthusiastic and who shared their vision for the delivery of the service. They understood their responsibilities to promote the Welsh language, ensuring displays were bi-lingual and encouraging the use of Welsh throughout the service.

Leaders are committed to delivering a service which operates compliantly and which is successful in delivering positive outcomes for children.

4.2 How effective is self evaluation and planning for improvement?

Leaders have procedures in place to assess the quality of the service they deliver.

Leaders had drawn on the views of parents, staff and other professionals in order to review the quality of care and to establish a plan for improvements. They held weekly team meetings where staff's contribution is valued and considered. Annual appraisals gave staff a further opportunity to voice how they felt the service could be improved and what training needs they needed in order to achieve this. Staff told us that leaders are approachable, they listen to their views and that these are acted upon. The quality of care review demonstrated how parents' views and suggestions had been acted upon. For example, parents had expressed wanting more information about the children's daily activities and what they had eaten at snack time. In response leaders had introduced a daily notice board and a twitter page to help keep parents informed.

Leaders optimise the feedback they receive to ensure there is a culture of continuous improvement.

4.3 How effective is the management of practitioners, staff and other resources?

Leaders are well organised and manage staff and resources successfully to meet the needs of the children.

Leaders ensured staff had clearly defined roles and responsibilities, keeping their job descriptions up to date and communicating their expectations clearly. They had systems in place for annual appraisal and staff told us this was a valuable process whereby they could voice their views. Leaders employed a sufficient number of well qualified staff who were carefully deployed throughout the service in order to use their recent training and skills effectively. For example, a member of staff with recent food hygiene training prepared the snack and an experienced member of staff qualified to Level 5 took responsibility as additional learning needs co-ordinator. Leaders provided an area for children's next step targets to be displayed so that all staff were aware of what they were and how to challenge, encourage and develop individual children to ensure they succeed.

Leaders are systematic and thoughtful in their management of staff and resources.

4.4 How effective are partnerships?

Leaders nurture positive partnerships with parents and other professionals.

A twitter page which is regularly updated with photographs of the children participating in various activities and half termly newsletters are used successfully to help keep parents informed. Parents were invited to complete an 'all about me' form which helped staff understand each child's preferences and what they had enjoyed throughout the year. Parent's fundraising ideas are put into practice whenever practicable with a rocket and Easter bonnet competition having taken place. Leaders work closely with the Flying start and early education team to access training to develop staff practices, monitor the children's progress and implement any recommendations they make. Leaders give thought to the children's smooth transition from the service to school. They had provided opportunities for the nursery class teacher to work alongside the children both in the service and when out on trips to help them to form a familiarity with each other.

Leaders highly value partnerships and are dedicated to providing a service which meets children's and parents needs.

5. Improvements required and recommended following this inspection

5.1 Areas of non compliance from previous inspections

None

5.2 Recommendations for improvement

We recommended that the provider could:

- consider completing the 'Infection Prevention and Control for Childcare settings' audit tool, and
- consider how the current use of sustainable and everyday household items could be extended.

6. How we undertook this inspection

This was a full unannounced inspection undertaken as part of our normal schedule of inspections. One inspector visited the service on 18th September 2018 between the hours of 13:10 – 16:10.

We:

- Inspected a sample of documentation and policies;
- observed practice and completed observations using the SOFI 2 tool, to evidence the children's engagement and the care being provided by staff;
- spoke to the staff present;
- considered the safety and suitability of the environment for the children, and
- provided feedback following the inspection visit.

Further information about what we do can be found on our website:

www.careinspectorate.wales

About the service

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| Type of care provided | Childrens Day Care Sessional Day Care |
| Registered Person | James Wilkinson |
| Person in charge | Maria Wellings |
| Registered maximum number of places | 30 |
| Age range of children | 2 – 4 years |
| Opening hours | 13:00 – 15:10 Monday to Friday during term time |
| Operating Language of the service | English |
| Date of previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection | 17 September 2015 |
| Dates of this inspection visit | 18 September 2018 |
| Is this a Flying Start service? | Yes |
| Is early years education for three and four year olds provided at the service? | Yes |
| Does this service provide the Welsh Language active offer? | This is a service that does not provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language. We recommend that the service provider considers the Welsh Government's 'More Than Just Words follow on strategic guidance for Welsh language in social care.' |
| Additional Information: | |