

Little St Joseph's

Inspection report for early years provision

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Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

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ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The provider must give a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must give a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Day Care and Childminding (inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 No 2300 Regulations 5 and 6).

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little St Joseph's opened in a new purpose-built setting offering education and full day care in January 2008. It operates from St Joseph's College Nursery, Infant and Junior Department, situated in South West Ipswich. The nursery operates from one main room within the school. It is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 during term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the Nursery at any one time and there are currently 30 children from two years to four years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for nursery education. In addition, there is a Reception class where some children receive funding during the summer term. Children attend the nursery for a variety of sessions; all children attend the reception class full-time.

The Foundation Stage (reception class and nursery) is led by the Early Years Manager, a fully qualified and experienced teacher. The college employs three full-time staff to work specifically in the nursery. All these staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and the nursery manager has completed a degree in Early Childhood Studies. The reception class is staffed by fully qualified and experienced teachers and learning support staff, many of whom also work alongside the nursery children during the week. The nursery receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children attend a setting which has good health and hygiene practices. One member of staff has attended food hygiene training and has informed the team so that all staff follow good procedures when handling food. Staff prepare daily snacks in the kitchen, cross-infection is minimised as they wash their hands, use appropriate chopping boards and ensure the area is clean. Fresh fruit is bought over daily from the school's canteen and the milk is stored in the fridge. Lunch and tea offered to the children is prepared by qualified cooks employed by the school. The kitchen is well maintained, good procedures are followed and it is regularly checked by Environmental Health Services. The nursery room is maintained daily by a cleaner and staff are responsible for ensuring that the room is cleaned throughout the day. Children who need a rest are able to do so in the sleeping tent where they are provided with a blanket which is washed after use. Nappy changing facilities are sound; nappies are currently disposed of in a nappy sac in an unsealed bin. A recommendation has been made to further enhance good hygiene practice by preventing children having access to the bin. Children learn to understand simple good health and living as they understand the importance of hand washing. Photographs are displayed of all different stages of hand washing to act as prompts to the children. Children learn through discussions about the importance of healthy

foods and keeping hydrated in warmer weather. A visit by the dental nurse was arranged and children were given information to help them learn about how to maintain healthy teeth.

Children receive good care when they are ill or have an accident as many staff members have accessed first aid training and there is a well equipped first aid box stored accessibly in the nursery room. The Nursery, Infant and Junior Department have a matron as well as a full-time teaching assistant who is a qualified nurse. Should a child require medication, the parents are required to complete a form allowing staff to administer it and provide details of the dosage and when it is required. Good procedures in place should a child be unwell; parents are asked to collect their child and keep them at home until they are fully recovered. Parents are informed of the length of time their child should stay at home by referring to the communicable disease sheet displayed in the setting. If a child has an accident, it is recorded in a book which parents are asked to sign to acknowledge the entry.

Children's physical play experiences are very well promoted because they have the use of a large, extremely well equipped outdoor area. Children freely flow from the nursery to the outdoor area making choices about where they want to spend their time. The outdoors has been set up as an outdoor nursery with indoor equipment used. Children very much enjoy being outside and choose to spend the majority of their time out there. In addition children have physical exercise lessons twice a week with a qualified and experienced physical education teacher. Children proficiently use their bodies to move in a number of ways, they enjoy using the steps to get up the climbing frame co-ordinating their arms and legs to pull themselves up and then slide down the slide. They competently use scooters using their balancing skills to push with one foot whilst they steer with their hands. Children use a range of tools such as scissors, pencils and paint brushes, their hand and eye co-ordination is enhanced through threading and by operating the mouse on the computer. Children are developing their self-care skills as they independently access the water fountain when they are thirsty and understand the need to wear a hat and sun cream when the weather is warm.

Children have their health and dietary needs well met and increase their understanding of healthy living. The majority of the children staying for lunch at the nursery eat a meal at the school canteen although some bring a packed lunch. Parents are provided with a weekly menu. Children walk over to the canteen with staff to have their lunch. Whilst they wait for lunch to arrive the children sit at the tables and are provided with vegetable sticks to eat and water to drink. A trolley is brought to where the children sit and each child goes up and selects what they want to eat. Staff are aware of children's dietary needs and allergies and encourage the children to choose vegetables with their meal. Hot food on offer includes roast meats, fish and pasta amongst many others. Hot and cold desserts are served with fresh fruit always being available. Tea is prepared by the kitchen staff and is brought over to the nursery, it usually consists of sandwiches with a range of fillings, fruit, home made cakes or oat biscuits. Snacks are offered both in the morning and afternoon and include a range of fruit and vegetable sticks, humus, breadsticks,

raisins and cheese. All food provided is according to children's needs and parental wishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The environment is extremely warm and welcoming for children, staff, parent and carers. The room is very clean and the space is outstandingly organised into areas. The room has been excellently designed to use all the space to its full potential, creating areas within the nursery. The staff have paid much attention to organising the layout of the room to ensure it caters for the children's needs and that everything is accessible. The room is divided into different areas including a carpeted book area with cushions, role play props, dolls house, a lino area which is used for messy activities, a painting easel always accessible and a computer area. Toilets are available in the nursery room. The outdoor area is very much an outdoor classroom with chalk boards, a play house, sand and water trays and physical apparatus. Resources are excellently presented to children in low-level drawers and trays which are clearly labelled both with words and pictures so that they can help themselves. Staff deploy themselves excellently, positively supporting children's development. The setting has an outstanding range of resources available to the children covering all areas of learning. The equipment is regularly checked, anything deemed unsuitable is removed.

The settings arrangements meet all health and safety guidelines. All staff are aware of the need to maintain a safe and suitable environment for the children and therefore are vigilant and ensure that children are very well supervised. There is an extremely pro-active approach to the assessment of risks in the nursery to ensure all possible hazards are minimised. Prior to the children arriving, a member of staff completes a thorough daily risk assessment on the premises inside and out, anything deemed unsuitable is written on a maintenance request form for repair. Annual risk assessments are conducted throughout the whole school, these include checks on all appliances to ensure they are in good working order. There are excellent procedures in place to manage entry into the building. Parents enter via the reception where they are greeted by staff who grant them entry into the school, all visitors are asked to sign a book and wear a badge so that they are identifiable to all staff.

In the event of a fire, children are excellently protected as the whole school practise fire drills each term familiarising children with the routine. The fire evacuation procedure is outstanding and ensures that all children are safely evacuated out of the building and congregate together. Precautions are taken as the school has a fire blanket in the kitchen, a fire extinguisher and fire bells in the nursery which can be pushed to alert the whole school. All staff received training from the fire service and the fire bells are checked once a week to ensure they are in good working order. Children are extremely safe on outings. Extensive risk assessments are carried out on every outing, identifying any possible hazards and how these will be minimised. Staff receive clear operational procedures on how to maintain children's safety. The staff always ensure that a first aid trained staff member is present along with a first aid

box and the reception staff have the details of the journey in case of an emergency. In addition, extra precautions are taken as each child wears a badge with a teacher's name and telephone number which can be called should the child get lost. Children's welfare is always safeguarded and promoted because staff fully understand their role in child protection. Staff have completed safeguarding children training and have very clear procedures in place which all staff are able to put into practice if necessary. The school has literature and a flow chart to guide them should they need to make a referral. Parents are informed of the school's duties via their policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children excitedly enter the provision; they are greeted by enthusiastic staff who personally welcome both the children and the parents into the setting. The nursery room is very brightly decorated with the children's art work, posters and photographs making it a very inviting setting to all. Staff join in with the children's play, they are outstanding role models, they model the activities showing the children how to complete new tasks. They offer the children a lot of praise to encourage them to try new activities congratulating them when they try regardless of whether they are successful. The activities on offer are highly varied and very interesting, encouraging children to be involved. Children are highly motivated and want to learn. Children confidently help themselves to the resources as they self-select their activity and maintain an interest for long periods of time. Further to the extensive range of activities provided in the nursery, children also attend outings to a wide range of places which in the past have included the theatre, farm parks, the zoo and participate in different events such as Children in Need. These outings add to children's experiences and their learning. They freely access the outdoor area during the day and thoroughly enjoy playing with the resources on offer. Children under three years of age are provided with excellent opportunities to learn and develop their skills, staff write observations throughout the day and transfer them into children's 'Birth to three matters' framework folders.

The Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. All staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. All staff are included in preparing an outstanding plan of activities and resources for the children. Starting points are gauged as staff ask children to complete an 'I can do book' with their parents prior to starting. The book asks the child to complete simple tasks such as drawing a picture of themselves. This enables staff to ascertain which stage the child is in their development in order to provide challenging, fun activities. Reflective planning is used by staff as a means to plan for the children, it is highly effective and ensures that children are interested and engaged in the activities and resources on offer. Staff meet at the end of the week to reflect on the week's activities and use the information gained through observations to plan the following week. Children's interests wholly inform the planning and therefore children's subsequent learning. This approach to learning ensures that the activities offered are

child-initiated so that children will both enjoy participating in and be very much engaged and motivated to learn. Appropriate challenges are set and are visible on the adult focussed activity sheet which clearly shows differentiation during the activity depending on each child's individual need. The plan for the week is highly effective and covers each area of learning. There is a superb approach that ensures tasks are shared by staff throughout the week and decisions made about allocating adult-led activities. All members of staff are involved in writing observations and placing them on the appropriate area of learning. Past topics have included dinosaurs, super heroes and holidays. Experiences are provided both indoors and outdoors and parents are fully informed of the week's plans and theme to encourage home and school links. The room has continuous provision and is set up inline with the chosen topic. Each area is clearly labelled identifying the resources, learning objectives and key vocabulary. Staff monitor whether children access all the areas making changes to encourage them if it is not being used.

Staff monitor and evaluate the activities offered to the children and are consistently making observations throughout the day to see what children have achieved. In addition to staff's observations, parents also write some and place them on the 'wow board' these are also used during the planning meetings so that all information is incorporated. Adult focussed activities are evaluated and notes made whether they were successful and any possible future extensions are noted. Observations are taken not only inform the following weeks planning but are also used to complete the child's step-by-step record of achievement. These are completed every half term and used to identify any gaps in a child's learning so that future activities can focus on these areas. Staff write reports for each child, giving the parents information about how their child is progressing in each of the six areas of learning. Staff use excellent methods to help children progress; through very careful interactions with them their professional skills are used, for example, in questioning children using open ended questions to encourage them to think and in return ask questions. Using their knowledge, staff know when to intervene in a child's play, suggesting new ways of playing to challenge and extend their learning. Children use their time effectively to play and learn in an excellent environment. The outdoors is outstandingly used as an extension of the inner classroom with an exceptional range of resources available. Independence is very much encouraged and children are developing this through self-selecting activities deciding when to change, controlling their learning. Children are very confident and are clearly extremely settled in their surroundings. They have built very good friendships both with each other and with staff often asking them to join in with their play. They get excited when they see their friends arrive and warmly welcome them. Children's self-care skills are very much developing as they independently access the water fountain, toilets and choose when to access their snack.

Children confidently talk to one another using a wide range of vocabulary, getting very excited when they describe new ideas or events. They proficiently use a range of descriptive language, for example, when making ice cream sundaes for snack, children have an in-depth conversation of what the best sauce is. As they taste their creations they describe what it tastes like using lots of intonation clearly showing their excitement. Children are able to use their thinking to logically solve simple

problems, for example, when sticking onto a large piece of paper, the sides roll up; when asked how to keep it flat, the child gets the scissor box and weights one end, then takes some scissors out to weight for the other end. Children are given many opportunities to mark make using an extensive range of materials. They are learning to recognise their names through daily routines such as finding their pegs. Children's mathematical skills are very much developing; they recognise numbers and are able to use them for counting and labelling. Children often refer to their age and are able to say whether someone else is older or younger. Children's descriptions often involve measuring, for example, one child refers to the teacher as being 'really big' he stands on his tiptoes and reaches up showing his understanding of the word.

Children are given ample opportunity to explore and investigate using an extensive range of resources. They thoroughly enjoy playing in the sand making sandcastles, playing with the different containers in the water tray and kneading and making objects with Play-Doh. Children show their excitement when they find something new and like showing the staff. They very much enjoy cooking activities and like watching the different ingredients being added, seeing the changes. The children get engrossed in their play and successfully enjoy making and designing things. For example, in warm weather two girls decide to make fans, they get a compact disk and straws and tape them together, going outside to test them. Children use the computer which has educational programmes; they show their expert skills by cleverly controlling the mouse and completing simple programmes. They reflect on their past experiences and learning through looking at photographs or talking about past events. Children's imagination is hugely aided by the provision of props and reflective planning helps staff build on children's experiences. For example, the outside currently represents the sea side, the house is currently an ice-cream parlour, amongst other things, with ice-creams that children have made, a till and money. They love pretending, being different people taking turns to sell the ice-creams re-enacting their experiences. The children enjoy putting the life jackets on, fastening the zip and pretending to go on holiday. Children climb the climbing frame and pretend to be in a boat going to Ireland. Children enjoy music and a range of instruments are made available; they are currently involved in the school concert. Children are having a wonderful time at the nursery and are progressing very well in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are all included and their differences acknowledged because staff have taken the time to get to know the children individually. Children have ample opportunities throughout the day to share their ideas, both as part of a group during snack and lunch time and also individually with a member of staff. Children take responsibility for their own learning as they freely access resources, building their independence and increasing their self-esteem. The room layout is highly effective and enables all children to be actively involved in their chosen activity both indoors and outdoors. Much effort is taken to help children feel valued. Their birthdays are celebrated, they are listened to and their opinions fully taken into account when

planning the following week's activities. Children feel a sense of belonging at the setting as they have their own pegs and are exceptionally well settled into their environment, quickly learning where resources are kept and the daily routine. Children enjoy helping the staff with little tasks such as handing the cups out to their friends at snack, washing up and helping to tidy up, feeling very positive when staff reward them with praise. They are in touch with their local community as they have both visitors come into the nursery and they go out on outings. Children have very many opportunities to learn about diversity through carefully planned activities, through the range of resources and through many discussions that take place with staff. Past activities have included celebrating Chinese New Year using older Chinese students attending the school to assist with the activities, giving the children a true understanding of the different aspects involved.

Children's individual needs are outstandingly met as staff take the time to get to know each child so that they can meet their needs. The setting is not currently caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator is available to help staff use appropriate strategies to aid children's development, setting appropriate goals using an individual education plan. Further help and support is available as close links have been established with the local authority. Children understand appropriate behaviour because they are clear about the boundaries and the staff's expectations. Staff are excellent role models to the children and very much encouragement is given for children to resolve their own disputes and by doing so they are learning to negotiate and take turns. Children are cared for by staff who work with parents to meet their individual needs and ensure that the child is fully included in the setting. Initially when parents start at the setting they are given a welcome pack which gives them information about the school and what it provides. All staff have a very personal approach to parents. The Head of Primary Education meets all new parents individually to talk to them about the nursery and in addition they are invited to an open morning where they are able to meet the staff and look round the nursery. The nursery staff ask parents to complete a questionnaire which gives them very useful information to help settle the children; for example, the child's likes and dislikes. The families are offered two taster sessions to gradually settle the child; the nursery has a very flexible approach to this, helping to meet children's individual needs. There are highly effective systems of communication in place, staff greet every parent daily as they drop off and collect their children telling them about their child's day. Each child also has a home school link book where both parties can write notes which are particularly useful if parents are not responsible for collecting their child. In addition each child has a pocket and within it each parent has an envelope where weekly letters and other information are placed, parents are required to sign to note they have received the information. The nursery also has very informative display boards in the nursery offering further information to parents. Parents are aware of how to make a complaint through the very well written complaint policy.

Partnership with Parents and carers is outstanding. Parents are provided with exceptional information about the Foundation Stage within the welcome pack. The information very clearly explains the areas of learning, the assessment process and emphasises how important parents are in their children's learning and how they can

be involved. Parent's views are very much sought and their observations are valued. They are encouraged to share what they know about their child as they are asked to observe them and make notes of any particular interests or achievements, these are then brought into the nursery and stuck on the 'wow board'. Staff look at these weekly during their planning time and include the comments within the planning, incorporating home interests strengthening the home school links further. Each area of the room is labelled with continuous planning sheets giving parents information about how the resources are aiding their child's learning and development. Parents are further involved as the staff send home a letter each week informing the parents of the week's topic, events and how they can help. Parents often provide resources to aid the topic such as photographs. Parents are informed of their child's achievements through parent evenings which give the parents an opportunity to meet on a one to one basis with staff to discuss their child's development, see their child's step-by-step folders and any work they have done. They also receive a highly comprehensive report which very effectively shows children's progress in their areas of learning. Parent's comments are sought so that any requests or concerns can be addressed. The setting keep photographs of activities and place them in scrap books, one for each area of learning. Parents gain further insight about how activities are linked as the stepping stones of learning are written next to the photographs. There is much encouragement for parents to be involved in their child's learning and workshops have been provided on various topics, for example, emergent writing; this helps parents to understand and be involved in the principles to early years learning. It is evident that excellent relationships have been formed between staff and parents with both parties being exceptionally comfortable when talking to one another and working together to benefit the child.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing their self-esteem, have formed excellent relationships with staff and children, children behave very well and are developing an awareness of different cultures through discussions and planned activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are very safe as they are cared for by individuals who have been vetted and are cared for by staff with a knowledge and understanding of child development. Children are safe as there are robust procedures in place when recruiting staff to ensure that they are suitable to work in the setting. The setting places an emphasis on training which is reflected in the level of qualified staff at the setting. There are three members of staff who work with the children, the nursery co-coordinator has completed a degree relevant to early years, one staff member has a level 3 qualification and the other is qualified to level 2. In addition staff are qualified in different areas such as first aid, food hygiene, safeguarding children and 'Birth to three matters'. All members are attending Early Years Foundation Stage training and some have accessed a range of educational based training.

Children are very well looked after as the nursery, staff have a very clear

understanding of the National Standards and their responsibility to comply. Staff deploy themselves very well, always ensuring that ratios are maintained and that each child is fully supervised. The staff work very well as a team, communicating throughout the session sharing ideas and tasks. Children's well-being is promoted by the well-organised records and policies. A daily register is maintained, however, individual children's times of arrival and departure are not recorded and consequently a clear record is not available in the event of an emergency. The nursery has an operational plan which is regularly reviewed and updated, giving the reader a very insightful view of the setting. Parents are asked to give the setting information about their child through completing a registration form and other paperwork. These documents are stored accessibly and confidentially on the premises. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The senior management ensure that all new staff are fully inducted into the school and are made aware of the policies and procedures so that they fully understand their role. All staff receive annual appraisals which are used to set targets, contributing to their professional development. Furthermore peer observations take place which identify where practice can be improved and enables excellent practice to be shared. The head of the lower school is responsible for monitoring staffing levels and staff training; he does this thoroughly by maintaining a folder listing the courses attended which he is able to refer to helping him plan for the future. Training needs are identified through appraisals but also through discussions with management who make the necessary arrangements. Following attendance on training courses, staff are asked to feedback key information so that all members are fully informed. Team meetings are highly effective and are regularly held giving the staff opportunity to discuss any ongoing issues, plan the week and liaise with other teachers, sharing ideas and practice. The staff have also formed excellent links with the local authority who regularly visit to offer support and advice, in addition staff attend network meetings furthering links with other professionals. Children's transitions into the reception class are very much aided as the school offers them a morning in the class. This helps children to prepare by getting to know the teacher and their new environment.

The Head of Primary Education and the co-ordinators have an innovative outlook on the Foundation Stage and offer the team excellent leadership. Staff are highly valued and motivated. As a team, the staff are outstanding at assessing their strengths and areas for improvement and are working very proactively to ensure that improvements are continuously made, raising outcomes for children. All staff are very much encouraged to be self-reflective and review their practice and by doing so children are rewarded by expert teaching that fully meets their needs. The self-evaluation form is a highly effective tool used to monitor the setting's quality of care and education. It clearly identifies areas for improvement, demonstrating the nursery's ambition to constantly improve their provision. Furthermore the Head of Primary Education maintains a list of changes to be made using the improvements identified in the self-evaluation, clearly showing how the improvements can be achieved. The nursery managers have exceptionally clear aims for the future and are taking active steps to achieve them.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable

Complaints about the childcare provision

Since registration there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review the nappy procedure, with reference to the disposal of nappies
- ensure an accurate register is maintained on a daily basis of children's actual hours of attendance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2473) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk