

St Johns Special School ASD Unit

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	EY378988
Inspection date	29/07/2009
Inspector	Kelly Eyre
Setting address	St. Johns School, Austin Canons, Kempston, BEDFORD, MK42 8AA
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Children only attend this setting before and/or after the school day and/or during the school holidays. The judgements in this report reflect the quality of early years provision offered to children during those periods.

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Autism Bedfordshire's 'Summer Scheme at St. Johns School' is one of two summer schemes run by Autism Bedfordshire. It opened on the current site in 2008 and operates from within St. John's Special School, Kempston, Bedfordshire. A slope to the main entrance means that the premises are accessible. Children have access to the fully enclosed outdoor play area.

The play scheme provides a service for children who have autism. It opens from 10.00 to 15.00 for three weeks of the summer holidays. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register to provide 25 places and there are currently ten children attending who are within this age group. The setting serves a wide catchment area. The majority of the children attend other settings during term-time.

The setting is also registered to offer care to children aged over five years. This provision is registered by Ofsted on both the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. Children occupying these places share the same facilities as the children in the early years age range. There are currently 46 children on roll in this age range.

There are 26 paid staff members. Of these, over half hold relevant childcare qualifications and several are currently attending training to achieve a qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is good. A key strength is the training of staff and volunteers, which enables them to understand the needs of the children and thereby offer them appropriate support. This means that children can participate meaningfully and are offered opportunities and activities that interest them. The high priority given to promoting children's safety is an additional strength, ensuring that they are cared for in a safe, secure environment. The positive attitude to self-evaluation means that managers have a clear overview of the setting, enabling them to develop appropriate plans to continue improving their practice and ensure that they remain responsive to the needs of the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- ensure that Ofsted is informed of all changes to senior staff that may have an impact on the running of the setting
- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are able to plan and provide further experiences which support children's development in all areas.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The consistent implementation of comprehensive policies supports the efficient running of the setting and means that children are cared for in a safe environment. Rigorous checks and a thorough induction procedure ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and are aware of their responsibilities. Risk assessments and daily checks are exceptionally practical and cover all details, meaning that children are able to move safely between their activities. Highly effective safeguarding policies are in place, ensuring that children's welfare is promoted. For example, all staff receive training relating to safeguarding children and they have access to a wide range of further supporting information.

Managers have a positive approach to self-evaluation, actively seeking feedback from staff, children and parents to inform the review of their work. They use this information to help develop plans for the future, leading to the potential to improve outcomes for children. For example, recent changes include the introduction of 'mini profiles', which detail children's needs and are used daily by staff to ensure that they are aware of all needs and can plan appropriate activities.

The setting works well with parents and carers, facilitating the exchange of information in order to provide consistent care and promote children's development. Daily discussions with staff, regular newsletters and communication books ensure that parents are offered thorough information about their child's progress and activities. Parents, staff and volunteers are fully informed of the setting's policies and procedures, enabling them to work together to protect children. However, the procedures do not cover informing Ofsted of changes to senior managers that may have an impact on the running of the setting.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The clear understanding of children's needs and the aim of ensuring that they have an enjoyable time means that children are offered a wide range of appropriate activities and play opportunities. The thorough procedures for gathering information from the children and from their parents and carers mean that staff can plan activities and provide resources that meet children's individual needs and interests and thus promote their development. However, this is not promoted to the optimum as the procedures for staff training and activity planning do not include sufficient detail regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage to enable staff to fully support children's development across all areas.

The daily use of children's individual profiles and the excellent support offered by one-to-one workers mean that children's needs are well documented and consistently met. The planning of activities is based on children's interests and is translated into daily schedules for each child, ensuring that they are aware of the day's events and are offered opportunities to express their wishes with regard to participation. Good use of alternative forms of communication, such as Makaton sign language and visual prompts, enable children to communicate appropriately with staff and ensure that their care is consistent with that provided at home and

by other providers such as schools and nurseries.

Good organisation of the setting ensures that staff are given the appropriate support and information to enable them, in turn, to offer appropriate support to the children. An example of this is the daily briefing session where staff are informed of all events and are able to discuss any issues. This area is further underpinned by good staff training and appropriate role modelling by the manager. Staff are therefore confident in supporting children to try new experiences, such as participating in outings and handling the creatures when the 'visiting zoo' comes to the setting.

The clear and thoughtful activity planning means that children are offered a range of activities that are well prepared. For example, children's confidence is built and their sense of security reinforced as they participate in familiar activities such as sand play, crafts and construction. Their knowledge is extended and they are offered new experiences through activities such as using the bouncy castle, watching a magician, visiting a farm and participating in visual arts and animation projects.

Thoughtful planning of the environment and easily-accessible resources encourage children to explore and extend their play. They enjoy using the 'rumpus room' and sensory room or participating in the 'sensory circuits', where the provision of appropriate background music either inspires, stimulates or offers a calming atmosphere. They have opportunities to develop physical skills as they use the soft play equipment or to calm down and relax in the quiet room. Children's enjoyment is further enhanced because staff provide resources to meet their interests. For example, children expressing an interest in letters and spelling are offered a letter activity where they enjoy putting the letters together to form words.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met