

Mount Carmel Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

123586

Inspection date

25/03/2011

Inspector

Jane Mount

Setting address

Verulam Playing Fields, Sandpit Lane, St Albans,
Hertfordshire, AL4 0BX

Telephone number

01727 838480

Email

Type of setting

Childcare on non-domestic premises

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

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).

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.

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Mount Carmel Kindergarten is a privately owned family run provision. It registered in 1985 and moved to its current location, a purpose built traditional Norwegian log cabin, in January 2000. The provision is situated in the playing fields of Verulam Senior School which is off of Sandpit Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire. The provision offers four separate activity rooms in addition to a secure outside play area. The nursery is open each weekday with sessions from 9.00am until 12.45pm and 1.15pm until 4.00pm, term time only.

The kindergarten is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is registered to care for a maximum of 50 children. There are currently 114 children on roll, all of whom are in the early years age group and of these, 75 children receive government funding for early years education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

Mount Carmel Kindergarten employs 13 members of staff and the majority of the staff team hold early years qualifications to Level three or above. The Principal has Early Years Professional Status (EYPS).

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The kindergarten provides a high quality service where children flourish in a child-centred, enabling environment. An enthusiastic and committed staff team recognise the uniqueness of each child and exceptionally well-developed knowledge of each child ensures staff are highly successful in effectively meeting children's individual needs. Robust safeguarding procedures ensure children are safe and their welfare is fully protected. Children are making rapid progress towards the early learning goals as their learning is purposefully promoted. Strong leadership and a positive attitude to improvement demonstrate the settings commitment to continuous improvement. Systems to effectively monitor the quality of the service offered, including self-evaluation, mean that plans are well targeted and improvements continue to be made where they will have the greatest impact.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continuing to use a quality improvement process, such as self-evaluation, to monitor and extend highly effective practice, to ensure continued improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Arrangements for safeguarding children are robust with stringent recruitment and vetting processes in place. Clear management responsibilities in relation to child protection have been established and an informative safeguard policy is in place. All staff update their knowledge of how to safeguard children's welfare as they all regularly attend appropriate training and fully understand their responsibilities if they did have a concern. Children's safety is of high priority throughout the organisation of the kindergarten. Staff are extremely vigilant when recognising hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Detailed written risk assessments are carried out and highly effective safety and security precautions promote and safeguard children's welfare. The security of the premises and outside area, staff deployment and their supervision of children ensures the environment remains safe at all times.

The setting is committed to fully implementing the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is reflected in their outstanding practice. The leadership and management of the provision is strong which results in staff who work extremely well together as a team as they are very clear on their roles and responsibilities. Their enthusiasm for caring for children is evident and an inclusive environment is created which clearly shows that each child matters. Continuous professional development is positively encouraged and staff undertake extensive and varied training. They are also pro-active in seeking feedback and have extensively consulted with parents, carers and children. The staff team are reflective in their practice and have begun to implement a system of self-evaluation to systematically identify the settings strengths and areas they wish to enhance further. The setting aims to actively use this as a way of ensuring continuous improvement.

All required documentation to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting is in place and well-organised. Comprehensive policies and procedures are used effectively by staff to protect children, promote their well-being and support all to develop to their full potential. All aspects of the nursery are extremely well-organised. Exceptional good use of space, resources and effective staff deployment ensures an enabling, child-centred environment. Excellent partnerships with parents significantly contributes to children's well-being and ensures their care and learning needs are fully supported. All children and their families are valued and included and parents receive a wealth of good quality information about the setting and their children. An online communication service was recently introduced and the setting has found this to be a beneficial way of enhancing the two-way sharing of information as letters and reminders can be sent instantly by email or text. Highly effective systems for working with parents and other agencies ensure children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are closely monitored and given valuable support to enable them to participate and achieve. Partnerships with other early years providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage are in place with effective links being forged with local schools to support children's transition to school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

The environment is child-centred and enables children to become independent and enthusiastic learners. They arrive happy and quickly settle and engage in activities. The kindergarten rooms and outside area are organised to offer a range of different types of learning experiences covering the six areas of learning. A key person system is effectively used and staff closely monitor children's learning. They have an excellent awareness of children's starting points and use this to plan the next steps in their development. Staff are clear how activities can be adapted for individual children and ensure all children are included. They are skilled at extending and adapting the range of activities which supports children's learning. Consequently, children's learning needs are identified and catered for and they are making excellent progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are enthusiastic in their play and participate in an extensive range of appropriately challenging and stimulating play experiences. They enjoy the vibrant atmosphere and show a keen interest in what they do. They are given free choice of activities within each room and staff promote a culture of actively encouraging children to become independent. For example, children confidently go to the toilet on their own or put an apron on to participate in an art or cooking activity. They also know when it is tidy up time and keenly help to put away resources. Children's creative development is fully promoted and they explore varied art media on a daily basis. They share ideas and thoughts and enjoy using their imaginations, such as when making a volcano together in the sand pit outside and then developing the idea further by drawing pictures to take home. Children experience regular music sessions and during the end of session assembly delight in singing songs, clapping and playing musical instruments together. Children listen and respond with great excitement when looking at books and listening to stories. Their speaking and listening skills are fully promoted. They confidently enjoy taking it in turns to tell favourite stories with the help of picture prompts while their peers listen eagerly.

Children have many opportunities to make connections and relationships with numbers, shapes and measures. Children match and sort objects, learn about volume through filling containers and confidently complete puzzles of different complexity. They show curiosity when looking at x-rays on a light board and are able to confidently compare the pictures they can see with the bones in their hand and arm. Children learn about the wider world and about other cultures and religions. They have extensive opportunities to talk about their families and home life and to learn about the local community. Children learn about the environment. They enjoy regular nature walks throughout the year, learning about the seasons and weather. They are currently completing a topic about Spring and are able to speak knowledgeably about the eggs they are patiently waiting to hatch in an incubator and the life cycle of a chicken.

The setting takes effective steps to promote children's good health and well-being and to prevent the spread of infection. Children learn to take responsibility for washing their own hands, flushing toilets or wiping their noses and disposing of

tissues appropriately. Good hygiene practice is reinforced through activities involving the handling and preparation of food, such as when children make Easter biscuits they know they must wash their hands first to prevent the spread of germs. Healthy eating is promoted and children are provided with healthy food choices at snack time and are learning about the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables. Plenty of fresh air and exercise keep children fit and develops their confidence in all aspects of physical development. Children are able to move with control and coordination as they manoeuvre around obstacles when riding bikes. They develop hand to eye coordination when trying to hit a ball with a bat and can confidently climb, balance and jump. Exceptional use is made of the outside play area and children have daily sessions in the gym.

Children demonstrate a strong sense of security and are confident and self-assured in the setting. Positive relationships between staff, children and parents enable children to feel secure. Children's understanding of keeping safe is evident. Staff help children gain an awareness of keeping themselves safe as they explain and practise simple procedures, such as not running when indoors in case they fall and hurt themselves. They keenly participate in regular fire drills and therefore learn how to stay safe in an emergency. Children's behaviour is exemplary. Staff are excellent role models and empower children to take responsibility for themselves as they learn to listen, share, take turns and be kind to others. Praise and encouragement from staff ensure children develop high levels of self-esteem.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
--	---

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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