



St Peter's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Registered person	The Committee of St Peters Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

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 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

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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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Peter's Playgroup has been registered at the present site since 2004. It operates from a large hall within a Sikh community school in Woolwich in the London Borough of Greenwich and serves the local area. The premises consists of the main hall, stage area, entrance foyer, a kitchen and toilet facilities. There is no outside play space at the premises.

A maximum of 20 children aged two to five years may attend the playgroup, and of these, not more than four may be under three years. The playgroup is open from Monday to Friday from 09:30 until 12:00, during term-time only.

There are currently 12 children on roll. Of these, 10 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery supports children with special educational needs and a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The current staff team consists of an acting manager and another member of staff, both of whom have appropriate childcare qualifications.

The playgroup is part of the Greenwich Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and receives support from an early years advisory teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a generally clean and hygienic environment where they are able to play, rest and relax comfortably. Some aspects of children's health are promoted because staff understand that keeping the premises clean helps to prevent the spread of infection. However, children are not fully protected from this risk because there is no written sick children policy requesting that parents should keep their children at home, if they are unwell. There are inadequate systems in place to record the administration of medication. This is a breach of regulations and poses a risk to children's health and well-being.

Children are beginning to learn about the importance of good personal hygiene because staff encourage them to wash their hands after using the toilet and ensure that supplies of toilet wipes, anti-bacterial liquid soap and paper towels are always available. But, children's opportunities to grow in independence and take responsibility for their own personal care are often limited because children cannot use the facilities on their own. However, this is due to the layout of the premises and therefore not within staff's control.

Staff are aware of the importance of promoting children's health and physical development through regular exercise and ensure that physical activities are a regular feature of their routine. Children consequently benefit from opportunities to engage in vigorous physical activity on a daily basis, as they participate in a range of activities, for example, using wheeled toys and climbing and balancing equipment. Activities also include movement, musical games and action songs.

Children benefit from a range of nutritious snacks and are consequently beginning to learn about healthy eating options. They are able to enjoy a selection of cut up fruit, for example, apples, bananas and strawberries. A snack menu is displayed on the notice board and includes a range of other snacks, for example cream cheese and crackers and raisins. Children are able to sometimes take part in preparing their own snacks, for example, making sandwiches and fresh fruit salad. Staff also try to

introduce children to foods from other cultures, for example, boiled bacon and cabbage on St Patrick's Day. Snack-times are relaxed and sociable and children are able to chat to each other and to staff, while they eat. However, some opportunities to develop children's independence are sometimes missed because children do not have opportunities to pour their own drinks at snack time and are not able to help themselves to drinks at other times during the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

The children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment. Adequate safety precautions are in place, for example heaters are guarded and electrical sockets are protected with socket covers. Security arrangements are generally good, for example, parents collect their children from the inner door and the outer doors are locked throughout the session. However, there is no lost children policy. This is a breach of regulations and means that children's safety and well-being may be compromised.

Staff help children to learn to take responsibility for their own safety by ensuring that they set clear safety rules and re-enforce these regularly. Staff give children frequent gentle reminders to take care so that they do not hurt themselves or others. For example, they must sit down when they reach the top of the slide and must be careful when using scissors. Consequently, children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe and to be aware of the safety of others. As a result of the good attention paid to safety and staffs' clear understanding of appropriate supervision, the children are able to move around the setting safely and confidently and to enjoy a range of activities.

Toys and equipment are well-organised and generally accessible to the children so that they can select some resources for themselves. All furniture and resources are in a good, clean condition and staff regularly carry out checks on their condition, thus helping to ensure the children's ongoing safety. However, children's welfare is not fully promoted and safeguarded because there are no written fire procedures. This is a breach of regulations. In addition there are no regular written risk assessments and fire drills are not carried out regularly or recorded.

Children have some protection from the risk of abuse because the manager understands her child protection responsibilities and is aware of the action to take in the event of a concern about a child. However, children are not adequately protected because there is no up-to-date written policy and procedure that tells everyone else what they should do in her absence. For example, if they have a concern about a child or if an allegation is made about a member of staff. This is a breach of regulations.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the pre-school and participate confidently in daily routines. For example, they join in with clearing up activities and find their named placemat at snack-time. Staff know the children well and have a good understanding of their individual needs. Activities are set up in designated areas, for example, home corner and book area. This ensures that children are provided with a balanced range of activities across most areas of their play, development and learning. They are generally able to move between activities and make choices from the activities on offer. Children also benefit from some opportunities to choose activities for themselves, other than those set out by staff. This is because resources, for example, some materials for creative play and writing materials are easily accessible to them.

There is a key worker system in place at the playgroup. This generally ensures that staff get to know the children well and that parents are effectively informed of their children's progress. However, at present the system is not fully operational because of recent staff changes. However, numbers of children have been reduced and this means that staff are able to monitor individual children's progress and take account of their needs and interests.

Staff are kind and caring towards the children and, as a result, children's confidence and self-esteem are developing well. Staff generally talk and listen to the children during free play and often ask them questions. However, opportunities to further extend children's language are sometimes limited. This is because activities and conversations are often interrupted because staff spend a lot of their time taking children to the toilet. Although staff have no control over this because it is due to the layout of the building, the situation is worse at the moment because there are usually only two members of staff present at every session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff understand that children learn best through play and their own first-hand experience and interests. They ensure that they provide a balanced, varied range of activities across the six areas of learning and use the Foundation Stage guidance effectively to help children to make progress towards the early learning goals. However, organisational issues mean that staff cannot always extend activities appropriately, especially for older children.

Planning and implementation of the foundation stage curriculum are generally sound. Planning consists of medium-term and short-term plans. These are based around the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Weekly and daily planning identifies focused activities and learning intentions. Planning is generally effective because it is understood by staff and shared with parents via the notice board. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals because staff ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Plans include evaluations but these are not always sufficient to identify the next steps in individual children's learning. There are currently no systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of nursery education.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is generally good. This is

because staff participate in children's activities and encourage them to talk about what they are doing, for example, as they make necklaces with cheerios, make yellow pictures and join in a bingo matching game. Consequently children are becoming confident. Staff praise children and acknowledge good behaviour, so that children are beginning to learn right from wrong. As a result, children behave well and are learning to become self-disciplined. They play co-operatively and share well. For example, as they take part in construction activities they help each other to find the pieces they need to make their models. Children are learning to take turns, for example, as they wait to use the slide and to sing a song to the rest of the group. Staff are good role models because they speak to the children with respect, for example, they thank them when they have done something. This means that the children are learning to be polite and show respect for each other. However, opportunities for children to become independent are sometimes limited. This is because although staff generally encourage children to do things for themselves, for example, they sometimes make their own sandwiches or fresh fruit salad at snack-times, children do not have opportunities to go to the toilet by themselves or to pour out their own drinks.

Children's progress in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. Children enjoy daily opportunities to listen to stories. They listen and concentrate well and join in familiar parts of the story. Staff are skilled at holding their attention and remind them to have 'listening ears'. Consequently, even the younger children are learning to listen to each other. Children have regular opportunities to speak individually or to a group during group times and are becoming confident, as a result. They enthusiastically join in familiar songs and rhymes and show great enjoyment by laughing and clapping as they listen to individual children singing to the rest of the group. Staff are generally aware of the importance of extending children's language and vocabulary by asking questions to encourage children to think and relating questions to past events. However, this is sometimes limited by having to cut a conversation short in order to take children to the toilet. Children benefit from some opportunities to make links between initial letters and sounds. For example, they are encouraged to recognise their name from the initial sound and by finding their named play mat at snack time. They can also independently access writing materials at the writing table. However, staff do not always encourage children to extend their writing skills, for example, writing their own name on their work. Therefore, learning in this area is sometimes limited, particularly for older children. Book provision is generally good and children are able to access books independently. This means that children are beginning to develop positive attitudes towards books and reading. They are learning to handle books appropriately because they are encouraged to do so by staff.

Children are making satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and are beginning to learn about mathematical concepts, for example numbers and shapes. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop children's learning through practical play activities and daily routines, for example snack time. Children are not generally encouraged to share out or cut up the fruit, set the table, count the cups and plates. As a result, they are not always able to relate mathematical concepts to everyday routines and activities. However, staff encourage children to name colours. For example, as they talk about the colours of their clothes and sing 'I can sing a

rainbow' as a member of staff points to the colours on a picture of a rainbow. Children are able to access a range of games and puzzles that re-enforce mathematical concepts. Charts and friezes are used to help children to recognise and become familiar with numerals.

Children's creative development is generally progressing well. They benefit from regular opportunities to express themselves creatively, for example, free painting and drawing. This is enhanced because children can freely access some materials, other than those put out for them by staff, for example, paper and scissors. Children enjoy frequent opportunities to express themselves imaginatively. For example they can use a range of props including cooking and eating utensils as they play together in the home corner and can play with a range of small world play equipment. Children enjoy regular opportunities to sing together and do so enthusiastically.

Children are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have some opportunities to learn about other cultures, that is, festivals and celebrations and foods. For example, they were able to taste boiled bacon and cabbage on St Patrick's Day. They have regular access to a range of multi-cultural toys and books that reflect both the children attending and the wider community. Therefore, children's understanding of cultures and beliefs is adequately supported and children are beginning to develop a positive self-image. However, children have limited opportunities to begin to learn about technology as do not have regular access to a computer or electronic or programmable toys. Children benefit from regular opportunities to build and design, for example, junk box modelling and construction activities and are beginning to learn to use simple tools. There are generally limited opportunities for children to learn about nature and the natural world. However, there is evidence that children sometimes plant seeds and watch them grow, for example, mustard and cress. Children have benefited from outings in the past and the oral health officer has visited recently. Overall, children have limited opportunities to learn about their environment and local community.

Children are making generally good progress in their physical development. They benefit from frequent opportunities to develop their physical skills through a range of planned activities. This includes movement, singing games, as well as climbing equipment, a slide and wheeled toys. There is ample indoor play space for the children to enjoy regular vigorous play. However, there is no outside play space and children do not visit any other outdoor play areas so there are no opportunities for them to enjoy outdoor physical play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from staff's understanding of their individual needs, for example, staff provide good support for children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Plans include activities that help children to learn about festivals and celebrations from a range of cultures, for example, Chinese New Year and St Patrick's Day. A range of multi-cultural resources are available to support children's understanding. This includes some dual-language text on the

notice board, for example, the snack menu. As a result, children are beginning to value and respect others in the community.

Children behave well because staff provide good role models for them. They treat the children and each other with respect and consequently children are learning right from wrong because staff explain to them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Children are learning to show care and consideration for others and to share and take turns. For example, when they use the slide. Staff promote positive behaviour through the consistent use of praise and encouragement and this also means that children's self-esteem is developing well. Staff make sure that they use positive language, for example, listening ears and walking feet. Children's social skills are developing well because staff encourage them to have good manners, for example, they remind them to say please and thank you at snack-time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. There is currently no written information for parents, in the form of policies and procedures. This means that parents are generally not well-informed about many aspects of the playgroup's operation. However, the playgroup positively promotes partnership with parents through welcoming parents into the playgroup and encouraging them to stay and help to settle their child in. Staff are friendly and approachable and are always willing to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the session. Staff use the notice board to provide parents with some basic information about the playgroup's operation, for example, a news sheet and a snack menu, together with activity plans. However, parents are not provided with any additional written information about the Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are provided with a welcoming child-friendly environment where play space is used imaginatively. For example, there are clearly designated areas where children can play, rest and relax comfortably. Staff are generally deployed well and are sensitive to the children's needs. However, when only two members of staff are present, they spend a lot of their time taking children to the toilet which means that activities are often interrupted. Staff are aware of the need to maintain appropriate ratios and have temporarily reduced the numbers of children attending accordingly.

The present staff team work hard and with enthusiasm to ensure that the children enjoy a positive experience at the setting. However, they are inadequately supported because of the lack of a comprehensive operational plan, including policies and procedures. This makes it difficult to ensure that children's care is consistently managed. There are several breaches to regulations which include lack of fire procedures, procedures to be followed if a child becomes lost or is not collected, a complaints procedure and child protection procedures. In addition, attendance records do not include a record of visitors. Because of this lack of documentation, there are significant gaps in the playgroup's ability to fully protect children in their care. In addition, the registered person was not aware of their responsibility to inform

Ofsted of any significant changes or events. In this case, that the previous manager left the playgroup in January. This is also a breach of regulations.

Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory. In the short-term the acting manager is responsible for running the playgroup, with support from the management committee. Her priority is to provide a reliable service for parents and their children. However, in the long-term, the lack of operational plan means that some aspects of the playgroup are not efficiently run or managed and this could have a negative impact on children, particularly in terms of their safety.

There is currently no system in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education programme. Consequently, weaknesses in the programme are not always identified and addressed.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the playgroup manager has left and there is currently an acting manager running the group on a temporary basis.

Although several recommendations were made following the last inspection, many of these are still outstanding and have been raised following this inspection. These mainly relate to procedures around child protection, risk assessment, sick children and fire procedures.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- keep a written record, signed by parents, of medicines given to children. Ensure that prior written parental consent for the administration of all medication is obtained.
- draw up a policy and procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or a parent failing to collect a child.
- draw up written procedures to be followed in the event of a fire. Ensure that fire drills are carried out regularly and that a written record is kept.
- promote children's safety and ensure that precautions are taken to prevent accidents by ensuring that regular risk assessments are carried out. Keep a written record of risk assessments.
- draw up an operational plan that includes policies and procedures. These should explain how the setting runs and be reviewed and up-dated regularly.
- provide information for parents of what to do if they have a complaint. This should take account of revisions to guidance to the National Standards made in October 2005. Ensure that a written complaints log is kept.
- keep a statement of the arrangements for the protection of children. This should include procedures to be followed if there is a child protection concern. Ensure that procedures comply with local and national procedures and include procedures in the event of allegations made against staff.
- ensure that all documentation is up-to-date, accessible and available for inspection by Ofsted at any time.
- ensure that Ofsted is informed of any significant changes or events, for example, change of manager.
- ensure that attendance records include a record of visitors, for example, by keeping a visitors book.

These actions are set out in a ***notice of action to improve*** and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

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

- develop methods of recording children's progress so that these can be used effectively when planning the next steps in children's learning. Introduce a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the nursery education programme.
- provide parents with some written information about the foundation stage.
- ensure that children have regular opportunities to re-inforce what they have learnt through daily routines and practical activities. Ensure that activities provide appropriate challenge, especially for older children.

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