



## St Matthew's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 508066  
**Inspection date** 28 June 2006  
**Inspector** Susan Elaine Heap

**Setting Address** c/o St Matthew's Infant School, Chadderton Hall Road,  
Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 0BN  
**Telephone number** 0161 287 9169  
**E-mail**  
**Registered person** St Matthews Playgroup  
**Type of inspection** Integrated  
**Type of care** Full day 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*

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](http://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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Mathew's Playgroup was registered in 1997. It operates from a large single storey pre-fabricated building, offering two large playrooms with toilet and kitchen facilities adjacent. It is situated off the grounds of St. Matthew's Primary School in Chadderton, Oldham. The playgroup is managed by a committee made up of parents. The playgroup operates from 09.15 to 11.45 and 13.00 to 15.15, Monday to Friday. The playgroup operates term time only and offers wrap around care at lunch

time where children bring a packed lunch. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 52 children aged from two to four years on roll, of these, 39 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and surrounding areas.

The playgroup employs five staff on a full and part time basis. Four of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and work directly with the children

The playgroup receives support from Early Years partnership and has also received a Quality Assurance - Quality for All award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where the staff actively promote good hygiene practice. They observe the written health and hygiene policies which effectively contribute to children's health and well-being and minimises the risk of cross infection. Children show a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They know the importance of hand washing and independently wash their hands after messy activities, using the toilet, and before snack or lunch time. The arrangements to care for children in the case of accidents and for the administration of medicines are good as three of the staff have current first aid certificates.

Children's dietary requirements are met effectively through discussions with parents. This is extended by giving parents sample healthy menus for children's lunch boxes. Children also learn about healthy living as they grow their own cress and make their own egg and cress sandwiches. As a result, children have many opportunities to learn about healthy eating.

The staff are committed to ensuring that all children have access to fresh air and exercise which is enjoyable, meets their development needs and contributes to their good health. For example, they play cooperatively together on the seesaw, and enjoy seeing how high they can go. They enjoy trips to the local park, play tug of war, join in sports day and play rolling on the grass. As a result, children develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise and enjoy daily outside play opportunities all year round which help them to develop control of their bodies.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in the setting because staff consistently follow health and safety procedures. For example, they vigilantly monitor entry and exit to the premises, regularly practise emergency evacuation and complete visual risk

assessments on all areas of the provision daily. However, recording risk assessments would improve practice further. Children move freely around the playroom, well supervised by staff who make sure children are always within their sight. They learn to keep themselves safe as staff involve them in discussions to raise their awareness of potential dangers. For example, they learn about road safety during topic work and actively put this into practice when they go for a walk and use the local pelican crossing.

Children make choices from a broad range of good quality toys and equipment which are maintained in good clean condition. Staff work well within the constraints of the setting and carefully organise space and resources so that children are able to access safe and suitable play materials.

Children are protected well as the staff know and understand their role within child protection and they have all attended training in this area. There is a clear child protection statement in place which is reviewed annually along with the other policies.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident in the nursery and have developed good relationships with the staff and each other. They eagerly share their news at circle time and listen attentively to the member of staff. They are motivated and interested in a broad range of indoor and outdoor play activities which are appropriate to their age and stage of development. The planning of activities for children under three has been recently introduced and follows the Birth to three matters framework and, as a result, is in the very early stages of development. Children benefit from having many sensory experiences, such as exploring 'feely bags' where they can explore different textures and learn new language. Children eagerly join in this activity and are given lots of verbal praise and encouragement. All children receive good levels of support from staff, who observe them and know when to actively involve themselves in children's play and when to give them the freedom to explore at their own pace. Staff throughout the setting work at children's level at all times, either by sitting with them on the floor or at the table, and give them good eye contact which helps them become confident communicators.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They use this to provide a balanced and broad range of activities across the six areas of learning. Children are motivated to learn through well-planned experiences and activities which capture their enthusiasm and sustain their interest. A variety of teaching styles are used and children have opportunities to work on a one to one basis with a member of staff or in small and large groups. Planning and the evaluation of activities are in place and show that staff make observations of children's play and how they plan to extend children's learning. However, there is no clear record of children's individual development and progress in line with the stepping stones.

Children enter the setting confidently and separate from their parents well. All children independently choose from the activities set out for them and make decisions in their play. They are learning to play cooperatively together as they play imaginatively with the cars and garage or take turns using at the computer. They are developing in confidence during circle time as they share their news or recognise and choose their name from amongst all the name cards. Even the newest child, aged three years, joins in with this and is offered lots of praise when she successfully completes the task. They are learning that print carries meaning and have opportunities to mark make in the writing area or in the home corner. A group of children write their own invitations for the forthcoming teddy bears picnic. They are developing a love of books and stories as the staff have started a playgroup library. Each week a child chooses a book and has their library card stamped. All children listen attentively to a story which is being read by a member of staff and actively join in what happens next. Their voices rise and fall with each new twist in the story.

Children enjoy learning because staff weave learning opportunities into everyday play and activities. For example, they have opportunities to use mathematics at circle time as they count how many children are present and they know that only three children can wash their hands at one time. They learn about growth and measurement as they plant sunflower seeds and record on a chart how high they have grown.

Children are developing a sense of the wider community and are learning about different cultures, beliefs and abilities through the activities and resources available to them and through their discussions with the staff. For example, during the topic on Chinese New Year they enjoy tasting new foods and have their faces painted to celebrate the Year of the Dog. They use information technology daily and know how to complete simple programmes. They are able to negotiate space, moving confidently from room to room and negotiate the steps outside well. Children are able to use a range of tools which develop their fine motor skills, such as using pastry cutters, rolling pins and scissors when playing in the play dough. They delight in joining in singing games and clap rhythmically to the beat. They stretch and crouch low, and laugh and giggle as the member of staff holds them in rapt attention. Overall, children make good progress towards the early learning goals given their capabilities and starting points.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Parents are positively welcomed into the group and greeted warmly on arrival. Discussions with parents, grandparents and carers demonstrate the high regard they have for the whole staff team and the positive way they manage children's individual needs, care and development. They state the introduction of the key worker system has positively improved communication. Parents are kept informed about current topics through newsletters and informal discussions with their children's key worker. Parents views are sought through the completion of an annual questionnaire and at the end of the year they are presented with a photo CD of their children's time at the setting. However, there are no formal systems in place to share pre-school children's assessment and progress with parents or involve them in supporting children's

learning at home. As a result, partnership with parents and carers with regard to nursery education is satisfactory.

Children have a strong sense of belonging and feel at ease in the setting, as they are warmly welcomed by friendly, familiar staff. Children play harmoniously together and are learning to manage their own behaviour. They follow the good models of staff by showing courtesy and consideration for others. For example, children wait patiently for a turn on the computer. Staff provide clear and consistent boundaries to help children know what is expected of them and use praise and encouragement appropriately to promote good behaviour.

Children are helped to feel special and good about themselves because staff take time to get to know them. Each day a helper is chosen to ring the bell to signal tidy up time which helps develop children's sense of responsibility and self-confidence. Children learn about the world around them in planned activities, outings around the local area and interactions with staff and each other. As a result, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the educational provision is satisfactory. Staff understand the setting's aims for the children's education and work well together to reflect the aims in practice. They access relevant training and have recently made links with the local school as part of their plan to improve the nursery education. This needs to be extended to ensure that monitoring procedures are in place and continue to identify and develop ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning further.

Children are cared for in a secure environment where staff attend to their needs and provide a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities which children enjoy. Staff make good use of the available space to make sure children eat, rest and play according to their needs. They work well together as a staff team and balance their individual strengths well to ensure that children enjoy and achieve. For example, one member of staff enjoys reading stories and children are soon engrossed in what happens next, while another prefers to work in a small group or on a one to one basis. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Policies and procedures work well in practice to help staff understand their role in keeping children safe and healthy and to inform parents about the childcare. All the legally required documentation is in place. This is monitored and reviewed annually to ensure that it is appropriate to the changing needs of the setting and that the high quality of care is continued.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to devise a procedure for lost children; ensure attendance registers show times of arrival and departure for staff

and children; and keep a detailed record of accidents and incidents and share this with parents. All this documentation is now in place and has improved children's care, safety and well-being.

At the last education inspection the setting was asked to develop opportunities for children to mark make; develop the programme for mathematics to include measurement and problem solving; ensure planning reflected children's individual needs in all six areas of learning; and develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to ensure child initiated play is supported and extended and complete a risk assessment on children moving between the two classrooms. All of these issues have been completed and have improved the quality of children's nursery education and safety.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints to Ofsted since the last inspection in February 2005.

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 satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **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):

- improve systems for recording risk assessments of the premises
- continue to develop planning activities to help children's development in line with the aspects and approach of the Birth to three matters framework.

#### **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):

- improve systems for linking observations of children to their individual

assessment record in line with the stepping stones

- improve partnership with parents by seeking the views of parents and work with them to plan the next steps in their child's learning and improve systems to involve parents in their child's learning by sharing assessment records on a regular basis
- continue to develop and improve the leadership and management within the setting by implementing a system to monitor and evaluate the success of the educational provision.

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