



St Faiths Centre Church

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY298449
Inspection date	24 May 2005
Inspector	Diane Mary O'Neill

Setting Address	St Faiths Centre Church, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3JN
Telephone number	01582 881481
E-mail	
Registered person	Hexton Village Playgroup
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Hexton Village Playgroup has been in operation since 1984. It has been at its current site since November 2004. It operates from St. Faiths Community Centre in the village of Hexton. They have the use of the main hall, disabled toilet facilities where children are accompanied as they need to pass through the kitchen area. All children have access to a fully enclosed grassed outdoor play area. The Playgroup has sole use of the building during opening hours. A maximum of 12 children may attend at any time. The playgroup is open each day from 9.30 to 12.00 term time only.

There are currently 23 children aged from 2years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these no children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the surrounding area. The play group currently does not support any children with special educational needs, but does support children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five staff, three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are currently no staff working towards a qualification. The playgroup have input from their Early Years Development worker and are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are developing and learning the importance of personal hygiene through well planned daily routines, such as washing hands after using the toilet and before having their daily snacks. Staff ensure they monitor the frequency of changing the hand washing water this enables any health risk to children to be minimised. Children benefit from a reasonably healthy snack time that includes different fruits. Children clearly enjoy eating a variety of fruits, as they spoke about the types of fruit they have had in the past. Drinks are offered as well at snack time and are available throughout the session, if required.

Children's physical development is encouraged through various play opportunities. They explore, investigate and develop physical control in a stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences such as planting and digging with soil to plant seeds. Their physical skills are extended with painting, printing, cutting and gluing and similar activities.

Staff have all required documentation for the recording of any accidents or incidents which are signed by parents when they collect their children. Children's wellbeing is protected as staff have a suitable understanding and awareness of health, hygiene and first aid practices.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe because staff are extremely vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Visitors are carefully monitored. The manager efficiently checked the identity of the inspectors before permitting them to have any contact with the children. Staff achieve a very good balance between free exploratory play and setting safe limits. This enables children to move freely and safely between activities indoors and outdoors. Children understand safe practice, for example, they carry chairs and scissors carefully and do not run indoors.

Children and parents are welcomed into an inviting environment with clearly defined

play areas. Children have safe access to effectively organised space and stimulating well maintained resources. Children move around with confidence and are comfortable with a good awareness of boundaries both inside and outdoors.

Staff take good care to protect children. They are keen to develop their knowledge and understanding of child protection issues to make sure children's safety is paramount. However child safety may be compromised by the lack of a clear policy regarding allegations against members of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident, chatting readily to staff and each other. They welcome visitors and are keen to express themselves, talking about personal experiences such as birthdays and holidays. Children are very involved in an extensive range of activities which contribute to their overall development. They play happily together with the diggers and plant pots in soil. They explore and expand their creative skills through an excellent range of activities. They engage in painting, printing, crayoning, cutting and gluing with enthusiasm. Children explore the theme 'growing', making sunflowers to stick on the front of pots, where they will grow sunflower seeds.

Children's play and learning is extended by skilful staff interaction, for example, staff join in when the children set up a picnic or play with puppets. Children develop good language and thinking skills through conversation and discussions with staff. They talk about planting seeds, holidays in a caravan, travelling on a ferry boat, and when they expect to start school. Children clearly enjoy taking part in discussions and understand that their contribution is valued and important.

Children are encouraged to express themselves and develop their imagination through an extensive range of well planned learning opportunities. Children learn about the plants, birds and animals as they observe wild life in and around the pond adjacent to the outdoor play area. Children have good opportunities to develop physical skills in indoor and outdoor activities. They demonstrate delight and enthusiasm when they join in singing games and there is lots of laughter and excitement when they play 'what time is it Mr Wolf'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality. Children's behaviour is very good. They learn to share, take turns and to treat each other with consideration. Staff provide support and are good role models.

Children have opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through planned activities, such as the Chinese New Year and learning simple sign language. Children develop an understanding of diversity through visitors

who come and talk about their countries, customs, and who read stories in different languages. Children visit local shops and places of interest. This stimulates and supports their growing understanding of the local community. Children demonstrate an awareness of and curiosity about the wider world.

Children with special educational needs are welcomed into the group and given appropriate support. They are treated with respect and sympathetic understanding because the group leader has considerable experience of working with children who have special needs. The group plan to develop the provision for special needs by training a member of staff to work as the Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

The good relationships with parents have a positive impact on the children's sense of belonging, trust and confidence. Parents views about their children's needs and interests are actively sought. This ensures staff have comprehensive information to allow them to provide individual support and care for children during their time at pre-school. Children benefit from the good communication between staff and parents. This is achieved in the regular formal and informal exchange of information and through the useful written information for parents.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are relaxed and confident. They are secure in this friendly environment where they develop confidence and self esteem as they move freely between different areas and choose from the interesting and stimulating resources. They are familiar with the daily routine and respond quickly to change throughout the session, helping to set up chairs for group times and waiting for the big puppet to choose them and then following his instructions about their tidy up duties. Children take responsibility for putting things away and know where to find items they want to use for play. The premises are well organised to provide indoor and outdoor play. This promotes children's learning in all areas. The good health practice, attention to safety and risk assessments all contribute to the overall welfare of the children.

Children benefit from staff who continue to develop their skills through on-going training. Children's welfare and care is supported by detailed records and documentation. However, there are some omissions in staff understanding of the policy for lost and uncollected children which could be detrimental to children's welfare and safety. It is also important that children's interests are protected by making sure the regulator is informed of any changes. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

This is not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made against this provision.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

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):

- increase staff knowledge and understanding of how to respond to child protection issues, including a policy to be followed in the event that an allegation is made against a member of staff.
- implement a clearly defined procedure to be followed in the event of a child not being collected.
- ensure any changes or incidents are reported to Ofsted.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk