



Marygate Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	321497
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Rosemary Beyer
Setting Address	Clifton, York, North Yorkshire, YO30 6AL
Telephone number	
E-mail	
Registered person	Marygate Playgroup, Clifton Methodist Church
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

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 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Marygate Playgroup is a sessional group established over 30 years. It operates from two rooms on the ground floor and a large hall upstairs in the Methodist Church near Clifton Green on a main road into the city centre. Marygate Playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 28 children from two and a half years to four years on roll. This includes 10 funded places. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The group opens four sessions a week Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings during school term times. Sessions are 09:20 until 11:50.

Three staff work with the children, with parental support. Two staff with Level 3 and one working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the

York Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The group is run by a committee of volunteers. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for on clean and well maintained premises, where good hygiene practice is implemented. The children learn to wash their hands after personal care and also before they eat. Most remember but younger ones need to be reminded when they are accompanied to the toilets.

All the children have physical exercise each day, whether with the ride-on toys in the main room or when using the large upstairs room for exercises and running games. They also visit the Homestead or the local play area sometimes when the weather is good, as there is no outside space available on a day to day basis. All move around confidently and safely. During musical games they obey instructions for different actions which they complete successfully. The older children use their bodies with good balance and control, whether on the equipment or moving around the hall.

The group has a sick child policy, which is made available to parents to help prevent the spread of infection, and they also have information about exclusion times for diseases. If children are taken ill, parents are contacted and they collect them as soon as they can. While waiting for parents to arrive the children are able to rest quietly, with staff support. Written permission is obtained from parents for medication and to seek medical help or advice in an emergency. Any accidents are recorded then acknowledged, by them, in writing. Staff ask parents to notify them of any head lice in the family and also if they know of cases of rubella, which are then publicised to parents.

Staff read information sheets carefully to ensure they are aware of allergies such as lactose intolerance. They then take effective steps to prevent children having reactions, by providing snacks or activities which take account of the allergy.

The children learn about the need to eat a healthy diet to remain fit and promote good growth, and can talk about the foods they should have. They eat a wide range of snacks including different fresh and dried fruits, also toast and sandwiches which they like to prepare for themselves. Most of the children are willing to try new foods for the first time. Biscuits are a treat so not provided each day. Milk and water are available for the children to drink. They can have water at any time during the sessions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are very conscious of the need to provide safe and secure premises where the children can play. They complete a risk assessment of the premises and check them before children arrive. The children use the larger ground floor room for general play and the small room

adjacent for messy and craft activities. They also have access to the upstairs room for physical games and exercise as there is no outside area available. Children have the use of a very good range of appropriate resources and equipment to meet their needs.

The children help themselves to activities provided and are developing a good awareness of the need to use toys and resources safely and carefully to prevent accidents. They move around the premises with good control and with confidence, whether during general play, using the ride-on toys or doing musical games. The group is very well equipped with suitable resources and equipment available to meet the needs of all the children who attend. Additional resources from the storage cupboard are obtained by staff on request, as children do not have access. The children tidy up the toys if they are on the floor, to prevent accidents and damage, or if they spill materials in the craft room.

Fire equipment is in place which is maintained by the church. Fire drills are held each half term, with the event recorded. The premises are secure, so children do not leave unsupervised and unauthorised persons cannot access the rooms used. Children tell the staff when visitors arrive, as they ring the bell to be admitted. Because the toilets are along the corridor, children are accompanied by staff

Children are protected by the good knowledge staff have of child protection. They have attended training to raise their awareness and also to develop their excellent policy. The file has been updated to take account of recent changes in the referral procedure. Robust systems are in place to ensure the staff who are appointed are suitable for the post, with police clearances, references and previous experience thoroughly investigated. They are all aware of their responsibilities and also the need to respect confidentiality.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All the children enter the setting happily and enthusiastically to see what is on offer. They are keen to try new things, for example the use of a torch in the den to investigate how dark it was. The activities and resources available provide a stimulating environment for all the children who attend and are planned and adapted to take account of the development needs of all the children. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to guide the activities for younger children, however they do not give parents information about this stage of their development, nor do they provide much about the Foundation Stage, for the parents of older children.

Children enjoy a good range of toys and resources to support their development. They self select from the activities provided but can also ask for other things to foster their interests. The younger children are developing their confidence and independence in the safe stimulating environment where they are encouraged to try new things and develop new skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance and have incorporated the information about 'firm foundations' in the policy file to support their practice. Planning has been developed to take account of the stepping

stones in all the areas of learning. Staff constantly monitor the provision and consider how it could be enhanced, also what future learning opportunities could be provided. The group is well equipped but staff have compiled a list of planned future acquisitions of furniture and equipment. The daily timetable is displayed on the wall and the children enter the playroom keen to see what is on offer. They are enthusiastic about trying new things, but also have favourite activities, including building a den in the climbing frame which then becomes all sorts of things in role play.

The children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They are confident and developing independence. They have good relationships with both staff and their peers, asking for assistance if they need it from either other children or adults. Their concentration and perseverance to complete tasks are good.

Children are able to choose from a wide range of activities which are planned to cover all the areas of learning, and can also ask for other things if they wish to have them. Their progress is monitored and recorded to ensure they are making suitable progress through the stepping stones. Activities are provided or adapted to ensure the more able children have sufficient challenge to promote their development.

Mathematical development is an ongoing part of the sessions, with numbers used at every opportunity for counting such as the number of children playing a game, domino and matching games, songs and rhymes. Some of the older children can count very well, and have a very good understanding of number and shapes. They enjoy doing work sheets, matching and finding differences between pictures very successfully.

All the children enjoy stories and books, either when as a group storytelling activity or when sitting in the book corner independently. They use books carefully and correctly, listen quietly but also enjoy participating in the story. The older children use reference books to learn about other cultures and countries, using the globe to show locations. All the children recognise their names, and most can write them recognisably, some use name cards to help write them correctly. They have free use of a wide range of mark-making equipment and they thoroughly enjoyed writing cards to Father Christmas and their friends. They also used stencils to make individual cards for their parents.

Children are also developing a good awareness of technology, and although they do not use a computer, a wide range of toys and equipment is available to for them to use. They particularly enjoy using the CD player, the cars and other programmable equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children behave very well. The written behaviour policy is made available to parents, and staff work with them if they have concerns about the children's behaviour. They ensure consistency of management at home and in the setting. The positive encouraging environment helps the children to develop trust in the staff, who treat them all fairly. The children know what is expected of them and treat each other with consideration and good manners. Older children support the younger ones in their games. A child gave another child a towel to dry her

hands, after they washed their hands after playing with the chalk, just to help her. The children use the toys and resources carefully and take turns. They help to tidy up before story and snack time.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the group, whether by joining the management committee, doing rota duty or by helping with fundraising. They receive an introductory letter when they first express an interest in the group and also the brochure with details of the setting. They then complete the information sheet and registration forms. Once children start to attend parents are able to stay as long as it takes to settle them, although they are not expected to do a duty in the first half term. Parents are able to attend the Parents' Forum where they can put their views about the group, make suggestions for future development and raise any concerns.

The parents feel very welcome in the group. They can approach staff if they have any problems and they like the range of activities their children are able to enjoy. They are also very pleased to receive the development files with progress books, development sheets and pieces of work. Staff give feedback about their children and their progress, when suggestions can be made if they have concerns. Parents do not however, have much information about the Foundation Stage nor are they given ideas for supporting their children with activities at home on a regular basis.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome in the group. Staff have experience of supporting different needs including speech therapy, and have created individual learning plans in line with the Code of Practice. They are willing to undertake training to ensure children's needs can be met and have had support from the local authority. The staff and children are very considerate of those who have difficulties, whatever they are.

The equal opportunities policy is made available to parents and successfully guides the daily management of the setting. Children and parents with English as a second language are very welcome to attend. Staff ensure the parents are able to understand the paperwork and they communicate with them to enable the children to enjoy their time in the group. Parents are consulted about different festivals and provide staff with an insight into different cultures and customs. The children learn about other cultures through craft activities and a wide range of resources. They also have different foods to try. During the past year they have celebrated Chinese New Year and Divali with support from parents.

Children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is fostered. The children are learning right from wrong, sharing and taking turns. They know that everyone is different and they treat everyone with concern and respect.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Robust procedures are in place for new staff appointments. The staff currently in post have appropriate childcare qualifications or are working towards them, and are also very experienced. They have a good commitment to training to further their personal development and improve their practice. The setting maintains good

staffing levels to ensure the children are well supervised, with parents providing additional support to allow them to be with the children. Staff work very well as a team, know what needs to be done. Self assessment is an on-going feature of the group, which enables staff to monitor and adapt practice to ensure the children's needs are met. They take advantage of each others interests and strengths to support children's activities, for example some like to tell stories and others are keen to do craft work.

Activities are planned by the staff as a group usually themed. They provide a programme to cover all the areas of learning, taking account of the different abilities of the children and providing challenge for the more able. The positive environment where children are encouraged to try new things and supported if they find them difficult helps them to make good progress.

Children self register as they arrive, choosing their name labels and putting them in the box. They usually arrive and leave at the same times each day, but any different times are noted to enable staff to monitor attendance should any concerns be raised in the future. Ofsted is notified of any significant events or changes. Records and information are kept securely and confidentiality respected.

The registration certificate is displayed for parents and visitors to see, and the conditions maintained. Parents also have information about the complaints procedure and know the record is available to them on request. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, activities were disrupted by the use of the ride-on toys. Children now only use the ride on toys at the end of the session, when activities are provided in the smaller room for those not wishing to play with them. This ensures activities are safe and enjoyable for all the children.

Children's independence is fostered at drink and snack time, when they pour out their own drinks, and some days they prepare the fruit, sandwiches or toast themselves.

The operational plan is now made available to parents as requested. Steps have also been taken through planning to ensure the more able children have opportunities to access resources to challenge them further and promote their development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents which they can see on request. The record of complaints 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 good.

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):

- continue to develop the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework when providing care for children under three years of age and make information available to parents

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):

- make information about the Foundation Stage available to parents.~

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk