



## St John's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	974633
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Tracy Larnach
<b>Setting Address</b>	St John's Church Hall and Community Centre, Victoria Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 1LN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 224957
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<b>Registered person</b>	St John's Pre School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 satisfactory. 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 John's Playgroup opened in 2001 and operates from two rooms within the St John's Community Centre in Margate. It is situated close to the town centre. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. It is open Monday, Thursday and Friday from 09:15 to 11:45 and Tuesday from 09:15 to 14:45. It operates during school term times. Children have access to a small outdoor play area.

There are currently 22 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs five staff. Of these, four of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One staff member is working towards a qualification. The playgroup receives support from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn about health and hygiene through the daily routine; for example, they wash their hands prior to eating snack and lunch. They know why they wash hands as the staff talk to them about germs. There is liquid soap and paper towels to help prevent the spread of infection. Policies and procedures are in place to promote the children's health, these are regularly reviewed by the staff. There is a sick child policy, adequate staff with current first aid certificates and parental permission for emergency medical advice and treatment. As a result, staff are able to act in the children's best interest should they have an accident or become ill. All accidents are recorded and signed by parents, this ensures they are able to care for their children appropriately. A medication policy is in place. There have been no medications administered at the playgroup so the record remains unused. Information about children's dietary requirements is kept in a file in the kitchen. Staff find out about allergies, this means they can act quickly should a child have a reaction.

Children are learning about healthy choices because the group provides a range of healthy snacks. A snack bar is available during the session and staff sit with the children assisting them in pouring their drinks and talking about the food they eat; for example, staff talk about the fresh pineapple being delicious. However, staff prepare the food in advance. As a result, children do not get opportunities to be involved in snack preparation to develop their skills and encourage them to explore and try new foods. Fresh water is available throughout the session and children help themselves when they are thirsty. The provision is open all day on Tuesday, this is new and children are excited about having their lunch at playgroup; for example, one child said, "My lunch is in the fridge, it has everything"! Information about healthy lunches is provided to the parents to ensure children are well-nourished. Children enjoy regular physical play both inside and out. The daily schedule includes opportunities to develop both large and small muscles. There are a range of opportunities for children to develop their physical skills; for example, outside children ride bicycles, kick balls and play catch. Inside there are balls, hoops and bean bags for the children to play with. These activities contribute to the children's physical well-being.

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

The provision is good.

Children are safe as the playgroup is secure and systems are in place for risk assessing. Staff are aware of all risks to children and use a checklist to ensure any issues are identified and corrected before the children arrive each day. There are effective systems in place for monitoring visitors and an arrival and collection policy to keep children safe. Staff teach the children about safety as they play; for example, they remind them to 'please walk', and reinforce this by saying,

'well done, I do not want you to slip'. The staff have parental permissions on file; for example, for administering first aid and for emergency medical advice and treatment. They have a satisfactory knowledge of child protection to ensure children are safeguarded. They know the reporting procedures and have received information regarding the Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Fire evacuations are carried out each term and over enough days to ensure all children become familiar with the procedure. The alarm used to ensure children are aware of the sound so would not become frightened in the event of a fire. A log is kept and fire prevention equipment is in place. An outings procedure is in place which includes undertaking a risk assessment and requesting parental permission for each outing. This ensures all outings are safe and suitable for the children.

The range of toys and equipment meet children's needs, and are clean and well maintained.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children arrive happily at the playgroup and are welcomed by the staff. Children become competent learners as they independently select from a range of toys and equipment. A variety of experiences are available, including large and small muscle, sand, gluing, puzzles, books, crafts, small world and role play. However, although there are materials for the children to use imaginatively, the range of media and natural materials for children to explore creatively are limited. Children are supported in their play; staff encourage them in turn taking and developing their social skills. Children's language is encouraged as the staff talk to them about what they are doing and asks them questions, listening to their responses. Staff use the Birth to three matters framework to plan for children under three. Observations are completed, although the use of these to inform the planning is developing in order to identify the children's next steps.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff are developing their knowledge and understanding of the Foundations Stage with support from the manager. A new planning system is being developed to ensure the observations and children's identified interests and needs inform the planning. Staff know the children well and set appropriate challenges so that children make progress towards the early learning goals. However, the assessment records do not always reflect the children's progress accurately. As a result, it is difficult to assess whether children have made progress in relation to their starting points. The assessment of starting points and observations along with photographic evidence is planned to detail the children's progress. This is to aid staff in evaluating progress, and therefore the success of the education programme.

Children are confident in the group and are developing close relationships with the staff and other children. They are learning to concentrate and sit quietly to listen when interested; for example, when they play games. Children are beginning to explore sounds as they enjoy rhymes and jingles. More able children are beginning to hear the sounds at the beginning of words; for example, the days of the week. However, group times, when sounds and numbers are discussed along with the day and the date, does not always capture the children's interest. As

a result, children begin to fidget. Children frequently visit the book area, they look at books independently and listen to stories with adults in small groups. As a result, they are learning how a book works and developing a love of books. There is some print in the environment as staff have creatively used room dividers for display. In addition, some of the equipment is labelled. This helps children develop an understanding that print carries meaning. Children mark make with chalk outside and have access to some writing materials; however, this is not extended to all areas; for example, the role play so that children can write for a purpose. Children use their names to self register but are not encouraged to write their names on their 'work'.

Children count as they play. They develop an understanding of mathematical concepts as staff support them in activities where they match, sort and weigh. Staff encourage the use of language such as 'full' and 'empty' as children play in the sand. Children use numbers as labels as they discuss the date and their age. Staff talk to the children about one more so they are beginning to understand simple calculations. Children learn about shapes; for example, they enjoyed using triangles to make pictures, describing the position on the paper and whether the triangles were large, medium or small. Children build with different types of construction sets. They become excited when they build towers taller than themselves. Some programmable toys are available so that children learn about information and communication technology. However, they do not have use of a computer in the setting. Children develop a sense of time as they know the routine at pre school and are secure in what comes next. Activities such as planting help children learn about the world in which they live. In addition, staff use learning moments; for example, the church bells ringing which a child compared to 'jingle bells' or the changes in the weather.

Children enjoy exploring media; for example, they choose to get paint out and enjoyed creating pictures, one child was painting and exclaimed, 'I love this!' Children enjoy music and became animated as they sing and dance accompanied by the piano. However, instruments are not freely available to access so children can be creative with sound. Children sing a range of songs from memory. They use their imaginations as they create games with the small world toys and play in the role play, making meals, hovering and dressing up. Children move confidently around the setting. A range of opportunities are available so that children can develop their large muscle skills. Children kick balls, play basket ball and ride on a range of wheeled toys, scooting or pedalling. Children's small muscles skills develop as they use equipment such as jugs for pouring, construction toys, play dough and scissors, with increasing control.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled as a key worker system is in place and a settling in procedure is followed to ensure parents and staff work together. As a result, children settle well and become confident. Children cooperate well together and show care and concern for each other. Staff use positive methods of behaviour management and the children behave well. Children are consistently praised for their achievements which develops their self-esteem. Staff give clear messages when children exhibit unwanted behaviour; for example, they get down to the children's level and clearly say what behaviour is unacceptable and the consequences; for example, the toy will break then we will not be able to play with it. Children are encouraged to take care of their needs; for example, they prepare paint by squeezing it into pots and deciding what colours

they wish to use, they help themselves to snacks, pour their own drinks and put their own coats on, this develops their independence. Positive images of culture and disability are reflected in the environment. Children are accepting of differences as the staff are good role models. Children are learning that people celebrate in different ways as special holidays and traditions are acknowledged to teach the children about the wider world; for example, Chinese New Year. The manager is the special educational needs coordinator. She is working with parents and developing relationships with outside agencies to ensure children with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents are welcomed into the playgroup to settle their children. They feel able to approach the manager and staff with questions and are very happy with the care provided. A detailed prospectus contains policies and procedures, including information about the Foundation Stage; however, the complaint policy has not yet been updated to meet current legislation. The prospectus explains how the playgroup is set up and the purpose of all the different areas. Parents meetings are held to inform parents of the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage. As a result, parents are aware they can view their children's records. However, systems have not yet been developed to assess children's starting points when they enter the nursery and to seek parent's views on their child's learning so they contribute to the records. Newsletters are regularly sent to parents to keep them informed. A parent questionnaire has been developed to seek parent's views.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The routine is organised to include a range of activities to promote children's development. However, the initial group time is not appropriate for all children; this results in the staff losing the children's attention. The committee has recruiting procedures to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. Staff, volunteers and committee members have completed all the appropriate checks. The required documentation for the safe and effective management of the setting and for the welfare and care of children is maintained and stored securely. However, the system for recording existing injuries and any incidents is not kept confidentially.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager, appointed in September, is enthusiastic and proactive. She has put procedures in place to improve outcomes for children. Staff meet together regularly and work very well as a team, they are working together to improve the planning system to better meet children's individual needs. Systems are being developed to review monitor or evaluate the nursery education programme and all staff are involved in self-evaluation. As a result, the staff team know their strengths, are aware of weaknesses and are committed to improvement.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection there were two actions and five recommendations made to improve practice. The actions were to, ensure a daily record of the full names of the children and the names of persons who look after children is maintained correctly and to develop and implement an action plan that sets out how the supervisor meets the required qualification criteria. The recommendations were to, develop staff induction procedures to ensure all staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities fully, develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities for children, which is appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs, to ensure accident records are accessible at all times and to ensure nappy changing facilities afford children privacy and dignity and takes account of their individual needs.

The manager has been in post since September and is suitably qualified. A daily attendance record is maintained showing the children's names and hours of attendance; however, it is being revised again due to a recent change in conditions of registration. This will ensure children are accounted for at all times. An induction procedure is in place and the manager continues to assess to ensure all staff, volunteers and students understand their roles and responsibilities and promote positive outcomes for children. Information has been provided to staff to ensure they are familiar with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, this ensures all children are safeguarded. The system for planning is evolving and there is a range of activities to meet the children's developmental needs. Accident records are kept appropriately for the welfare of the children and nappy changing procedures afford children privacy and dignity.

At the last education inspection there were five key issues identified. These were to develop effective leadership and management systems to provide direction and support to staff, to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones and early learning goals, and how everyday activities and routines can be used to further develop children's learning, to develop children's assessment records ensuring that a child's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals is shown, across all aspects, to encourage further involvement from parents and carers in their child's learning and to develop the planning to ensure children are appropriately challenged or supported in meeting their individual needs and link learning objectives to the stepping stones or early learning goals.

Since this inspection a new manager has been appointed. She has put many systems in place to ensure staff are provided with direction and support and have the knowledge and understanding to enable them to provide appropriate support to the children. Assessment records and planning is evolving to ensure children are appropriately challenged and supported to meet their individual needs. Learning objectives are linked to the stepping stones or early learning goals. Partnership with parents is also evolving as staff share children's progress and are developing systems for parent to contribute to the assessment records.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection 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 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 satisfactory. 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):

- update the complaints procedure to reflect current legislation and share with parents
- ensure the recording of incidents and existing injuries is maintained confidentially
- review the routine of the session and ensure group times meet the children's needs.

#### **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):

- continue to develop the system of planning and assessment, to ensure information gained through observation is used effectively to inform the planning and identify children's next steps in learning (this also applies to care)
- provide opportunities for children to mark make and write for a purpose throughout the session
- continue to develop the system for assessing children's starting points and ensure parents have regular opportunities to contribute to their children's assessment records

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)