



St Christopher's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205566
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Kathryn Margaret Clayton
Setting Address	St Christopher's Church Hall, Convamore Road, Grimsby, DN32 9HR
Telephone number	01472 250326
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Registered person	St Christopher's 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 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 Christopher's Playgroup operates in St Christopher's Methodist Church, which is situated in the Heneage area of Grimsby and serves the local community. The playgroup was first established in approximately 1968 and is run by a voluntary management committee. The setting is registered to care for 16 children and there are currently 24 children on roll, including 23 in receipt of nursery education funding. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities also attend the setting.

The group opens five days a week during school term time and sessions are from 09.00 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.30. The playgroup employ six staff, all of whom hold early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority and they are members of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health within the playgroup is appropriately supported by suitable hygiene routines; for example, children are encouraged to wash their hands before they have a snack and tables are prepared using antibacterial spray. Children learn about healthy eating as they eat mainly healthy snacks during the session. Some examples of these include a variety of fresh fruits, raisins, crumpets and toast with cheese spread or jam. Children start to learn about the importance of drinking regularly as they independently access fresh water directly from a water cooler within the playroom.

Children benefit from a programme of regular physical activity. They have access to an outdoor area and, on some occasions during the week, an additional playroom. Children use a good range of equipment which helps to develop their physical skills. For example, bicycles, scooters, bean bags, sit and ride toys, a balancing beam, a parachute and a climbing frame. The setting do not always have a member of staff working who is trained in current first aid procedures, nor do they always obtain written parental permission to give medication to children; therefore, there are times when children's health may be compromised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, friendly, warm and suitably maintained environment. They enjoy using well-spaced activities, such as role play, sand play, dressing up, puzzles and painting. They have access to an appropriate range of toys and play materials that are regularly cleaned and checked for safety. Although children enjoy some opportunities to select resources – for example, when they are completing collage pictures – their choice is somewhat restricted and their independence is not always promoted as other activities are set out for them.

Children remain safe in the setting because staff supervise them effectively and there are suitable security measures in place; for example, chains and bolts on exit doors. Children start to learn about some aspects of keeping themselves safe as they are involved in the regular evacuation of the premises. All evacuation procedures are clearly displayed, therefore ensuring staff are fully aware of their roles. All areas used by children are regularly risk assessed and staff are careful that only named persons collect the children. Children are safeguarded because staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of their responsibilities with regard to protecting children and the procedures to follow should they have any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and generally confident in the playgroup. They relate well to staff and their peers. Children enjoy a suitable range of well-planned activities and have their needs effectively met by a caring staff group. Many children are able to concentrate for some time; for example, when completing a collage picture. Children, including those in receipt of nursery education

funding, do not always benefit from sufficient opportunities to be actively engaged in learning. For example, at snack time many children wait passively until they receive their food, and during a large group activity, mixing play dough, many children wait for some time before they have a turn to be involved in the mixing process.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children make steady progress towards the early learning goals. Staff plan a suitable programme of activities and ensure children's progress is assessed on a regular basis. Children join confidently together in small groups and staff are effective in promoting their confidence and self-esteem, therefore helping them to settle easily. For example, a three year old is encouraged to make a picture to take home for a baby in her family. Many children show a caring attitude towards each other and help their friends with tasks, such as learning how to play a computer game. Many children speak clearly and are starting to recognise their names on their coat pegs and at snack time. Many listen attentively as staff tell them a story; however, children show little interest in books during free play, and are not encouraged by staff to do so. Children show an interest in writing as they make marks and some recognisable letters when writing their name in the mark-making area.

Children are very interested in counting and this is effectively encouraged by staff who make sure they have good opportunities to count in everyday situations. For example, the number of children and adults present at the playgroup session. They confidently count as a group to 12 and are becoming aware of larger numbers as they complete computer games, such as 'Millie's Maths House'. Children's learning is further promoted as they can see numbers displayed in the play area. They recognise simple shapes; for example, rectangles and triangles when eating toast at snack time. Children enjoy good opportunities to learn about the natural environment. They learn to care for animals as they incubate and watch ducklings grow. They have further opportunities to notice change as they take part in activities, such as mixing play dough. Children start to gain some understanding about the passage of time as they name the days of the week. Many are aware of what day it was yesterday and what day it will be tomorrow. Children show appropriate skill when using a mouse and have good opportunities to use information and communication technology equipment, such as a digital camera, a cassette player, a remote-control toy and a shop keeper's till.

Children enjoy a good planned programme of daily physical activity. They are excited as they move to music, roll, wriggle and spin. Many show good skill, for example, when pedalling a bicycle. They confidently manoeuvre around the space, and some can pedal backwards. Children enjoy good planned opportunities to learn about their feelings through taking part in activities, such as completing self-portraits and making masks that express how they feel. Children show some imagination, for example, as they shop for food. They enjoy good opportunities to explore colour and texture, for example, through painting, collage and three-dimensional threading activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an atmosphere where they are valued and respected as individuals. They have access to some resources – for example, puzzles and displayed photographs – that help them to start to be aware of a diverse society. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported in the group. The setting work closely with parents and the local authority support services to ensure children's needs are effectively met. Many children behave well. There is a positive and encouraging atmosphere in the playgroup that helps children to learn about acceptable behaviour and promotes their self-esteem. For example, staff work closely with parents to help children be successfully toilet trained. Children benefit because staff make sure they discuss any general behavioural issues with parents; however, specific incidents that occur are not always recorded and parents are not always informed with full details of what has happened. The setting do not have a system in place to record and investigate complaints made by parents that relate to the National Standards.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents have access to suitable information about the educational provision, within the playgroup booklet and displayed in the entrance area. Parents and children benefit because there are good systems in place to encourage involvement in their child's learning. For example, parents are encouraged to stay, should they wish to, and to bring in items to support the work children are doing in the playgroup. The links with home are further enhanced with activities, such as taking 'Toby Bear' home for the weekend and writing a diary about what has happened during that time. Although parents are made aware when they enrol their child that they can discuss any issues with their child's key worker, there is no system in place to routinely inform parents about children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit as they are cared for by a well-qualified and established staff group, who work well as a team and have a good commitment to undertake ongoing training and development opportunities. Children's attendance is accurately recorded and the setting work within the conditions of their registration at all times. Most of the documentation needed to support children's welfare is readily available, confidentially maintained and well organised. However, the playgroup do not always obtain written parental permission to administer medication: this is a breach of regulation and a possible risk to children's health.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff receive good support from the committee and meet regularly to plan and discuss any issues that may arise. They work closely with the local authority to improve the nursery education provision, and most of the issues raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The setting show a positive attitude towards ensuring the ongoing improvement of the nursery education provision. 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 the playgroup were given a number of recommendations relating to the cleanliness of water used for hand washing, the recording of accidents and the cleaning of toys. They were asked to revise the behaviour policy, improve the information given to parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum, and improve the organisation of resources. The setting were asked to raise children's awareness of the different purposes of writing.

Since the last inspection, the safety of children has improved as toys and equipment are now cleaned with a non-hazardous solution. Children's health has improved as they now have the opportunity to wash their hands individually using clean water. Accidents are correctly recorded. The partnership with parents has improved as parents are provided with a welcome booklet containing some details about the nursery education provision. Further information about the activities provided is displayed in the playgroup. Children are protected because there is now an anti-bullying procedure in place.

Children are made aware of some of the different purposes of writing through, for example, using the writing table and making marks within role play situations. Some efforts have been made to improve children's access to resources; for example, through the provision of a range of collage materials. However, not enough has been done to effectively promote their independence and choice.

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.

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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):

- ensure parents sign to give their consent before medicines are administered

- ensure there is always a member of staff on duty who is trained in current first aid procedures
- provide children with more opportunities to select from a wider range of resources
- further improve children's opportunities to be actively engaged in learning (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure all incidents are fully recorded and parents informed
- devise a system to record and investigate complaints made by parents that relate to the National Standards.

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):

- provide more encouragement and opportunities for children to develop an interest in books during free play
- ensure parents are informed of the progress their children have made.

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