



## Westerhope Methodist Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 319341   |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 10 January 2007  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Shirley Peart  |
| <b>Setting Address</b>         | Stamfordham Road, Westerhope, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE5 5HA |
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| <b>Registered person</b>       | Westerhope Methodist Church Playgroup                      |
| <b>Type of inspection</b>      | Childcare  |
| <b>Type of care</b>            | 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](http://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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Westerhope Methodist Church Playgroup was registered in 1992, but has been established since the 1970s. It is based in a church hall in a residential area in the west of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The group have access to one main room and two further rooms within the church hall. There is no outdoor play area.

The group is open during school term-times on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.15 to 11.30 and occasional Tuesday afternoons from 12.30 to 14.45. However, the group is flexible regarding opening times, which matches the needs of families and the numbers of children attending. Children attend for various sessions during the week. The group cares for a maximum of 26 children aged from two years to under five years at any one session. There are currently 29 children on roll. The group supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The group is overseen by the church. There are two playgroup leaders and a further seven staff who are available to work with the children. The leaders hold relevant qualifications. The setting receives support from various professionals based in the local authority and the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a hygienic environment. Domestic staff, available through the church, ensure that thorough cleaning takes place once a week, which protects the children well. Staff ensure that hygiene practices are good, as they wash the tables before snack and encourage children to wash their hands after visiting the bathroom. However, children are not encouraged to wash their hands routinely before their snack.

Documentation regarding accidents meets requirements. A clear exclusion and medicine procedure is in place and consent is obtained for emergency medical treatment. A communicable disease chart is also displayed for parents, so that they know when not to bring their children into playgroup, which protects them from cross-infection.

Children have a plain biscuit and milk for their snack, which ensures that their nutritional needs are adequately met. They enjoy sitting together as a group during snack time and staff make good attempts to involve the children in whole group situations. For example, they introduce the children one by one and encourage them to say 'hello' to each other. They confidently say 'please' and 'thank you' when reminded by the staff and join in with counting activities.

Although there is no outdoor play area, children have regular opportunities to play physically. At every session they use specific equipment in a planned way, such as bikes, and they use large blocks with good control as they help to build tall towers. This ensures that their overall physical development is appropriately enhanced.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a spacious hall area and access smaller rooms for planned sessions, such as singing. Areas are well defined and set out for the children so that they easily access their toys and activities, such as play dough, large blocks, painting, jigsaws, books, role play and small world toys. All of the equipment is very good, safe, clean, age-appropriate and includes some diverse and natural materials, such as junk play boxes for gluing activities.

Children know the routine and are beginning to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they are offered regular reinforcements and reassurance by staff, as to why they should not run in the playgroup. All children manage to walk beautifully to the second room for their singing activity from the snack tables. Documentation and good staff practice supports the children's safety well, such as attendance records, fire procedures, risk assessment, lost and

uncollected child policy, a secure room and good staff deployment and vigilance within the room.

Good information and procedures are in place regarding child protection. All the staff have recently carried out safeguarding children training. The leaders have a good understanding of child protection matters and clearly understand their role and responsibility. This ensures that children's welfare is well protected.

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

The provision is good.

Children enter the playgroup happily and confidently and leave their parents easily. They eagerly approach the toys, activities and the staff to make their needs known. They have very good, general play opportunities which enhances their enjoyment, development and learning very well. For example, children use their imaginations well as they make the 'dinner' in the role play area or enthusiastically build with the track and road, and use the small world toys effectively. They play cooperatively to build high towers with the large building blocks and their mathematical development is effectively enhanced during their play and routines. For example, they state that the tower is getting 'bigger' and show delight and amusement when it tumbles down and they count each other with the staff's help during snack time. Therefore, they are beginning to understand and use mathematical language in a meaningful way.

Children eagerly join in with a planned printing activity, but quickly engage in free exploration of the paint, as they prefer to feel the texture with their fingers and hands. This free expression is well supported by the staff, which is good. Children are beginning to know the routine, as they enthusiastically help to tidy up, sit at the table for snack time and go to the door ready for singing-time. Children are happy and animated as they spontaneously sing during their play and hold conversations with staff about significant events, such as Christmas.

Staff are very good at involving the children and help them to develop their language and social skills very well. For example, during their general play and snack time, staff ask children lots of open ended questions which make them think, and respond successfully. Therefore, children achieve well and thoroughly enjoy what they do.

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

The provision is good.

Children have very good relationships with the staff; they approach them easily and confidently attract their attention when they need help with their activities. Staff in return are very responsive and caring, and show a keen interest in the children and what they do.

Any concerns regarding children's progress or ability is discussed fully with the parents and the staff ensure that they are able to meet the needs of all children. They have a good support network in place via the local authority and the playgroup network.

Positive, acceptable-behaviour information is displayed for parents and staff, and there is also relevant discipline information available in the parents leaflet. Staff aim to build up children's

self-esteem and confidence as they offer lots of positive, meaningful praise and encourage them to introduce themselves during snack time. Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour, such as when they help to tidy away the toys or successfully share them.

Partnership with parents is good. Staff ensure that registration forms are completed, which includes specific needs, such as allergies and cultural issues. Parents receive a good introduction leaflet and specific information is displayed on the notice board. Parents are welcomed into the group usually by name and parents of the younger children are able to stay in the group or in a nearby room until they are settled. Staff are very flexible with admission and times of attendance, to ensure that children's individual needs are well met. Parents are very happy with the service. This is evident in the abundance of thank-you cards and from the verbal responses of parents.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The staff team is long-standing and stable and they are highly dedicated to their work. The two leaders have very good qualifications for their role, such as a teaching qualification and a National Vocational Qualification Level 4, foundation degree in childcare. Other staff have relevant experience, as some also work with children outside of the group, such as lunch time supervisors in schools. Staff information files are available and staff complete regular self-appraisal forms, which helps them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and any training needs. Staff attend regular training, usually provided by the local authority and most hold relevant first aid certificates. This ensures that children are cared for by knowledgeable, competent staff. Although the playgroup leaders have a basic awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, this is not currently implemented in practice for children under three years and staff have not yet been able to gain any training in this area.

Policies and procedures are good and match the fourteen National Standards; some are also shared with parents in the parents leaflet. However, the complaints information was out of date and the poster on how to contact Ofsted is not displayed.

Adult-child ratios are good; therefore children receive lots of attention, which positively supports their learning and development. A good general routine is in place which combines both child and adult-led play, physical play, group singing, story time and snack time. Staff maintain good links with a worker from the playgroup network and, therefore, receive effective support and advice where necessary.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

There was only one recommendation from the last inspection, which was for staff to continue to assess the quality of the existing provision to make effective plans for the future. The group has made satisfactory progress. Although there is no formal self-evaluation of the provision,

staff continually strive to monitor this, which ensures that it meets the varying needs of the children.

### **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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **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 good. 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):

- ensure that children are encouraged to follow good hygiene practices before snack time, by washing their hands
- consider developing knowledge and understanding of the relevant sections in the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- update the complaints information in the policies and parents leaflet and display the Ofsted information poster for 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)