



St Andrews Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251641
Inspection date	22 January 2007
Inspector	Glenda Kathleen Field
Setting Address	St Andrews Church Hall, Roman Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 2DQ
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Registered person	St Andrews Playgroup
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Andrews Playgroup are a committee run group and meet in St Andrew's Church Hall which is situated close to the town centre of Lowestoft. The group serves the local community. Sessions operate during term time only Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 11.30 and Tuesday and Friday afternoons from 12.15 to 14.45. A secure outside play area is available.

There are currently 41 children on roll, of these 40 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties. The setting receive support from the Early Years Daycare Partnership (EYDCP) and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

The setting employs 9 members of staff, of whom 7 hold a relevant qualification and 1 member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, for example, staff clean tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to snack time. Children are learning the importance of good health practices through the regular routines of the setting. Children's well-being is further promoted because staff are well informed about any care issues they may have and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. Should a child become unwell whilst attending the setting, appropriate measures are in place to support them until their parent or carer arrives to collect them.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of a good range of healthy snacks. They are able to choose from a wide range of fresh and dried fruit, cheese, ham, toast and malt loaf. Children are able to satisfy their own needs should they feel thirsty, by the provision of drinking water which they can independently access throughout the session.

Children's physical needs are very well supported. They are able to move round the hall freely from one activity to another and enjoy rolling and catching balls, or scoring a goal in the miniature basketball net. They enjoy playing inside games such as 'Jack jumped over the candlestick', showing their skills at throwing bean bags into large hoops and using the slide. Children have access to an outside area where they enjoy ride-on toys, parachute games, tunnels, balancing on small stilts and running and jumping. Children are able to practise their small physical skills through using scissors, pencils, brushes, and threading items. They use malleable materials such as dough to pinch and roll with their fingers and hands.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and very secure environment. Children are kept safe by effective procedures in place such as the good routines for their arrival and departure, the effective monitoring of all visitors to the setting and the carrying out of regular risk assessments. The available space enables children to move freely around the setting and experience a good range of activities to promote their overall development. Children are beginning to understand about keeping themselves and others safe when staff talk to them about walking inside, and picking up toys so others do not trip over them. Children are also learning how to keep themselves safe in an emergency by the practising of fire drills.

Children have access to a wide range of resources and activities which meets their needs in all areas of their development. These are easily accessible from low-level storage containers and child-size tables, children are able to self-select resources and gain independence through making appropriate choices.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded and promoted as staff have completed child protection training and all have sound knowledge of the signs of abuse and neglect. The setting has a comprehensive policy in place detailing their responsibilities in protecting children, which

includes a procedure to be followed for any allegations made against staff or volunteers. Staff have a clear understanding of their role in protecting children and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy being in the setting. They arrive enthusiastically and separate from their parent or carer quickly and settle at an activity. Children respond well to each other and to staff. Children are confident to talk to unfamiliar adults in the setting, for example, asking them to read a story, asking their names and giving their own names when asked. Children's self-esteem is developed by praise from staff. Children behave well. They are encouraged to participate in the activities which are on offer and are able to independently choose activities from the low-level storage containers. Not all staff have yet attended training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and the setting does not currently use the framework in their planning to develop opportunities for young children to build on their natural curiosity as learners.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, and of how young children learn. Children benefit from a variety of teaching methods used such as an appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities provided. Children access the outdoor environment on a programmed basis to support their physical development and the indoor area is used when the weather is not suitable.

Long, medium and short term plans are in place and cover all aspects of the curriculum. Focussed activities take place with identified learning intentions, however, they do not identify any differentiation needed to address individual children's stage of development.

Children's assessment records are regularly updated and set out using the stepping stones leading to the early learning goals. However, they do not identify the next steps in children's learning to inform planning.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff on arrival. Children display good levels of confidence and are eager to participate in new activities, for example, playing in the "post office". They interact and negotiate with others, for example, when using the floor track and cars. Children carefully and appropriately handle books and pretend to read stories to each other, demonstrating they know print carries meaning. They are beginning to know letter sounds and names as they participate in letter recognition games. Older children attempt to write their own names, for example, at the writing area when completing activities. Opportunities are made for all children to develop their mark making skills, such as when playing with sand in the sand tray and taking part in imaginative play activities such as the post office.

Children are developing awareness of their own needs and those of others as they participate in cultural activities such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. They are making friendships in the

setting and seek out a preferred playmate and play alongside each other for extended periods of time interacting and negotiating roles, for example, as they construct towers with play bricks.

Children count reliably to five and use number to solve practical problems like how many chairs are at the table for snack time. They are developing a sense of time as they discuss, during whole group time, the weather, the day of the week and month of the year. Children are learning simple calculation skills as they sing number rhymes, such as using their fingers to count with when singing ' five speckled frogs'.

Children have a good awareness of space as they freely manoeuvre around the setting. They use wheeled toys, slides, mini-stilts and roll and catch balls and bean bags. They are learning about their local community as they visit the local library and the local nursery school. Visitors to the setting include the fire service, health visitor and vicar. Children are learning about other cultures through topics such as Chinese New Year and Diwali. Children use construction resources to build, for example, towers with the Duplo. Children are learning about information technology as they use programmable toys and imaginative play resources such as the microwave.

Children are exploring colour, shape, texture, form and space in two and three dimensions as they handle the play resources. They use their imagination well when playing with construction resources and explore musical tones and pitch when playing with musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued by staff who respect their individuality, which is helping them develop a sense of belonging. All children have equal access to toys and equipment. They are praised by staff who talk to them spontaneously about their home life, for example, "Is mummy going shopping today?" Children are learning about their local environment as they visit the library and nursery school, and receive visitors to the setting such as the fire service and the vicar. Children confidently enter the playgroup and are happy to follow the daily routines.

Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from staff who have attended the appropriate training. Their individual needs are addressed through following the Code of Practice and working alongside other professionals.

Children are encouraged to be independent in self-care when using the toilets, washing their hands and accessing drinking water during the session. They take care of their environment as they help tidy up activities. Children are learning about acceptable behaviour as they follow the routines of the day. They benefit from staff who use distraction, praise and encouragement to help them understand what is acceptable. All children share and take turns amicably.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive information about the pre-school in the setting's prospectus and are informed of the term's curriculum topic in newsletters. Children benefit from the two-way sharing of information between parents and staff through daily chats, notice board information and regular newsletters. Parents have opportunities to contribute to their children's development records through open evenings

and the offering of individual appointments. The playgroup's management committee is made up of parents of children attending the playgroup.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered because they are developing confidence and self-esteem, behave well and are developing a good understanding of right and wrong. Children relate well to each other and staff, and are developing an understanding of their community through visitors to the setting and outings made. Children are beginning to show an appreciation of other cultures and beliefs through topics and activities offered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's health, safety, welfare and well-being are promoted by the implementation of clear written policies and procedures. However, an accurate record of staff's arrival and departure is not kept. Children benefit from a robust system to ensure staff who work with children are suitable to do so. The employment procedures and induction of new staff are implemented effectively to promote children's welfare and safety. Children are looked after by staff who are encouraged and supported to attend training and increase their knowledge of childcare and early education which enhances the learning environment.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The committee and staff team are committed to continuous improvement of the playgroup. The committee meet regularly and the supervisor is invited to attend these meetings. Staff meetings take place regularly to discuss training issues and planning of sessions. A staff appraisal system is in place. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to obtain a copy of the Government publication 'What To Do If You're Worried A child Is Being Abused'. Ensure that all clusters of learning are effectively planned for in communication, language and literacy, in particular linking sound and letter and provide parents with opportunities to discuss and view their children's achievement records. A copy of the Government booklet is now in place. Opportunities for children to link sound and letter are now incorporated into session plans, for example, in letter recognition games, and parents are offered individual appointments to view and discuss their children's achievement 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.

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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):

- develop a suitable range of activities for the younger children as explained in the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- ensure that an accurate record is maintained of staff's arrival and departure from the setting.

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):

- ensure observation records are used effectively to plan for the next steps in learning for individual children
- ensure that focussed activities identify any differentiation required to address individual children's stage of development

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