



## St James's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY339305
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Lee
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<b>Registered person</b>	St James Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<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 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 James's Playgroup was originally registered in 1966 and was re-registered in September 2006, when the group moved to new premises. It now operates from the Edgerton Hall suite of rooms within Gledholt Methodist Church, in the Gledholt district of Huddersfield. It is a voluntary organisation, managed by a committee of parents.

Children are cared for in a large hall and also have access to a small, adjacent room. There is no outdoor play area, but part of the large hall is used to provide opportunity for physical play activities at each session.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each week day, with the exception of Tuesday, from 09.30 to 12.00 during term time only. There are currently 40 children on roll, of whom 16 receive funding for nursery education. The

playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and for those whom English is an additional language.

There are four staff employed to work directly with the children, three of whom have an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards this. The playgroup has achieved the Kirklees Healthy Choice Gold Award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy some planned physical play activities each day. They learn to use the small space well as they ride around on the cars and bikes. They sometimes enjoy a planned exercise session or set up an obstacle course to encourage them to move in different ways. Access to large play equipment, balancing beams and a trampoline is offered within the planning cycle. However, staff do not routinely plan sufficiently varied physical challenges within the everyday environment.

The playgroup environment is bright and welcoming. Staff show a clear understanding of the importance of good hygiene practice and they implement procedures effectively, so that children are protected from infection. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication meet requirements. Written permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment is not clearly sought. Children remember to wash their hands before they decide to have their snack. Staff successfully promote good hygiene routines, helping children to become increasingly independent in attending to their own personal care.

Parents are fully consulted about their child's health and dietary needs. Children are well nourished and enjoy lots of fruit. They sometimes help to cut up fruit for their own snack, although this is not routine. Snack time is relaxed and sociable. Staff sit with children and they enjoy conversation together. Staff plan projects to raise children's awareness and encourage conversations about healthy eating. Children are offered a choice of milk or water to drink and are always able to pour their own drink independently from the water jug.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's understanding of safety is promoted well, as staff raise their awareness of risks within everyday activities. For example, they know they must be 'very careful' when using the scissors. Staff discuss limits and boundaries with children and routinely reinforce safe practice. Consistent reminders about rules help children begin to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe. Well planned activities promote children's awareness of wider safety issues. For example, the 'lollipop lady' visits the playgroup to help children think about safe ways to cross busy roads. They read books on the role of the emergency services, as they learn about people who help us in different situations.

Children learn to use the whole play environment purposefully. A range of good quality resources is stored at child-height, so that children can select them freely. Appropriate risk assessments are conducted and practice is consistently evaluated, to increase all children's safe participation in everyday activities. Accidents are routinely monitored and the premises are secure. There is clear planning for safe evacuation, which is practised with children, so that they understand what they must do in an emergency.

Children are cared for by staff, who understand their responsibility to protect them and keep them safe. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with children, although systems for vetting the members of the parent committee are less robustly established. Staff establish supportive relationships with parents and help children to feel confident to make their needs known. Most staff have accessed recent basic training to update their awareness of child protection issues and the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There is not currently a clearly designated child protection coordinator, who has attended an appropriate level training course. The child protection policy has recently been updated, although it does not clearly reflect current guidance. Required procedures for recording any concerns are in place, although there is no clear system in place for recording of existing injuries.

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

The provision is good.

Children are very happy in the playgroup and enjoy warm interactions with staff. They develop high levels of independence, as they plan their own play, using the whole environment with confidence. Staff get to know children well and show interest in what they do. Opportunities for role play are well planned, encouraging children to share their own experiences through play. They make a tea party for the dolls in the home corner, engrossed for a long period in their private world. They cooperate to develop extended imaginary games, as they dress up as policemen and give out 'tickets' to the drivers. They enjoy small world activities with the fire engines. Children freely access lots of different media for exploration, like sand, water, paint and dough. Resources for creativity are always readily accessible and children enjoy cutting, gluing and sticking, making models and collage pictures.

Staff consider the 'Birth to three matters' framework when planning activities within the continuous provision for the younger children. They respond intuitively and sensitively to the support needs of younger and more vulnerable children, so that they settle well and happily seek support from well-known staff. Planning carefully takes account of the needs of new children and parents are actively involved in the settling in process. The daily routine is planned to minimise interruption to children's play, so that children are able to become fully absorbed in activities which interest them.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is satisfactory. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning is comprehensive and helps children to make sound progress towards the early learning goals. Children's interest is sustained by a broad and balanced range of well planned activities and experiences. However, some areas of the continuous provision, like maths and construction, are less imaginatively resourced. This limits stimulus

and the potential to extend learning and challenge in some areas. Staff are deployed well to support children's play and learning. Children learn to listen well, concentrate and persevere with activities they enjoy. Daily routines encourage children's active involvement and minimally disrupt their play.

Children communicate their thoughts and ideas confidently. Staff introduce new language well into activities. Children use a wide range of factual books to extend their awareness of the world around them. For example, they use books to learn about the people who help us. Children have opportunities to write for real purposes in their play and to describe their work. They learn to recognise their name, although staff do not actively promote their interest in letter sounds. Children count and become familiar with number concepts within everyday play and routines. They act out number rhymes at group time, using their fingers to show how many fish were alive. Staff do not always maximise spontaneous mathematical learning opportunities sufficiently within children's free play.

Children learn about the natural world, growth and change. They observe the weather, look for mini-beasts and collect natural materials. They learn about birds in winter and make bird feeders, which they take home and observe which birds enjoy eating it. They develop an interest in technology, as they become skilled at using the computer and printing off their pictures.

Staff plan well to stimulate children's interest and help them to consolidate their learning. They model skills and consistently reinforce expected behaviour, so that children learn to work cooperatively and use all activity areas productively. Staff have developed clear systems to observe children's interests and monitor their individual progress. Assessments of progress are linked to the stepping stones. Staff are considering how they can most successfully utilise their observations of children to differentiate planning of activities in the continuous provision and plan next steps in learning, to ensure children are fully challenged in their everyday play.

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

The provision is good.

Staff create a very child-focussed environment, in which children make lots of choices and decisions about their play. They are settled and content, as they participate fully in the routines of the playgroup. Children develop a strong sense of belonging. They learn to express their own needs and preferences, as they become very familiar with daily routines. They access resources freely and help to keep the play environment tidy. Children enjoy warm and trusting relationships with staff and with each other. Their individuality is nurtured, promoting their confidence and self-esteem. They show pride in their achievements, as they display their pictures in the picture gallery.

Children behave well, as appropriate behaviour is sensitively encouraged. Staff consistently reinforce rules and boundaries, so that children learn to share and take turns, although they do not clearly plan opportunities for children to manage their own turn taking. Children play very cooperatively and learn to negotiate with each other, knowing staff will offer support if it is needed. Staff clearly explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable.

Children enjoy lots of activities, which help to promote their awareness of the wider world. They learn about the lives of people from other cultures, how they dress and what they like to eat. They share celebrations and learn about festivals. For example, they learn about Chinese New Year, making lanterns and fans and eating Chinese food. They have books, which make them aware of other scripts. Regular visitors into nursery, like the police woman, help to raise children's awareness of roles in their local community. Staff work hard to help children and parents participate confidently and feel fully included in playgroup life. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Relationships with parents are relaxed and comfortable. Parents are encouraged to play a very active role in both running and helping at the playgroup. Staff communicate informally with parents on a daily basis. They share information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, to help parents understand their child's experiences in the playgroup. Parents receive written information to help them feel appropriately informed, when helping on a rota basis at the playgroup sessions, about their role and how to help children with activities. Policies have recently been fully updated. They are displayed for parents and include the complaints procedure, which has the contact details of the regulator. Parents clearly know how to raise any concerns and a record is kept of complaints, as required.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are encouraged to access their child's development records at any time, although these could be made more readily accessible. They value the daily informal sharing of information. Staff encourage parents' active involvement in their child's learning by ensuring they are aware of planned activities and how they can contribute.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The nursery environment is organised appropriately to promote children's welfare and safety. Daily routines are clearly planned to respond to their varying needs and interests. Staff are deployed well to ensure appropriate levels of care and supervision. Children's experiences are enhanced by well-planned opportunities for staff to access appropriate training to support their professional development.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Space and resources are organised well to promote children's independent learning and participation. Staff work closely together as a team and are developing an effective approach to shared reflective practice. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and the impact on children's learning are being developed.

Policies and procedures are mostly appropriately implemented, so that children's welfare is safeguarded. Systems to vet staff and ensure their suitability are in place, but are not yet fully robust. Staff are effectively supported by a committee of parents. However, the committee has failed to notify Ofsted of changes to its membership and of a change to the person-in charge, which is a breach in regulation.

Appropriate induction procedures, together with ongoing staff monitoring and appraisal, ensure staff are able to support children's individual needs effectively. Required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. Parents' wishes regarding their child's care clearly influence day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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:

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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):

- plan to offer children a wider range of physical activity choices at each session, to enhance their opportunity to explore new skills (also applies to Nursery Education)
- ensure all staff are fully familiar with their child protection roles and responsibilities, that policies reflect recent guidance and develop a clear system for recording of existing injuries
- ensure all significant changes are notified to Ofsted and that systems for checking the suitability of both staff and management committee members are robust.

### **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):

- use observations of children more actively to identify next steps in their learning, to increase challenge in their everyday play (also applies to quality and standards of care)
- promote more opportunities for children to count, use mathematical ideas and solve problems in their free play
- develop clearer systems to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on children's learning.

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