



Stockland Green Methodist Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	229001
Inspection date	27 February 2007
Inspector	Shirley Delaney
Setting Address	Stockland Green Methodist Church, Slade Road, Birmingham, West Midlands, B23 7JH
Telephone number	0121 386 2254
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Registered person	Stockland Green Methodist Church 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Stockland Green Methodist Church Playgroup opened in 1993 and operates from the community hall attached to the church. It is situated in a residential area, next to retail businesses, in the Stockland Green, area of Birmingham. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup operates during school term time only. They are open each weekday, except Thursdays from 09.30 to 11.30 and during the spring and summer terms the group operates between the hours of 9.10 and 11.40 for children in receipt of funding for early education. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children on roll, aged from two years to under five years. Of these 11 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup supports children for whom English is an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of the parents whose children attend the playgroup live in the local area.

The playgroup employs five members of staff, four of whom hold an appropriate early years qualification and one is currently working towards a qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years support teacher. The setting is currently undertaking a bronze quality framework award. The playgroup is a voluntary group under the management of a committee.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is generally promoted satisfactorily. They develop an awareness of good personal habits as they follow bathroom routines, and older children wash and dry their hands independently after toileting. However, children's health is not comprehensively promoted as the use of shared bowls of water in the playroom for children to wash their hands before eating at snack time presents a risk of cross contamination.

Children benefit from being cared for in clean and well maintained premises as the staff implement effective health and hygiene procedures. For example, food is prepared under hygienic standards and tables are cleaned before children's snack times. Children develop some awareness of a healthy diet and how it contributes towards healthy lifestyles as they join in activities run by outside agencies. Their interest in food is nurtured through inclusion in tasks such as cooking activities. However, food routinely prepared for the children's snack does not fully support children developing a positive approach to healthy eating and fresh drinking water is not available throughout the session enable children to make an independent choice.

Children have regular opportunities to take part in physical exercise. They are able to choose large physical play in another area of the building as an option during the free play section of the daily routine. They have opportunities to develop their physical skills whilst running and playing with a range of toys. Children use tricycles, scooters and pushchairs, which help develop their skills in pedalling, pulling and pushing. They have planned opportunities for using large equipment such as climbing equipment which enable them to practise skills in climbing, balancing, crawling and sliding when making use of the local recreational area. Children enjoy taking part in movement to music and move their body parts in line with the instruction on the taped music.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about some aspects of personal safety through discussions with staff about safe practices. For example, staff remind children about not running when they leave one room to access another area of the premises. They ask children what is expected of them and children reply "we do not run we walk"; this helps to prevent trips and falls. On outings in the local area they talk about and practise road safety. Fire drills are completed regularly with children, which helps them to become familiar with the process for evacuating the building safely in the event of an emergency. These activities reinforce and develop children's awareness of safe practices.

There are some systems in place to promote children's security. For example, after the parents have left the door is locked. However, when the building is in use by other groups the security of the playgroup is affected, this potentially compromises children's safety. At these times staff have no means of ensuring they deny other people access to the playgroup rooms. Whilst staff undertake risk assessments they are not sufficient to comprehensively identify all risks accessible to children. As a consequence some hazards remain accessible to children in the playroom. The staff demonstrate that effective consideration is given to maintaining toys and resources in safe condition, as damage to broken toys is recorded and they are discarded.

Staff have a clear understanding of their role in relation to child protection. Children's welfare is generally promoted as staff are aware of signs of child abuse. They know who to report their concerns to and the procedures to be followed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop a sense of trust and security as they are looked after by key members of staff. The key worker system helps staff to learn about the particular needs of each child, within their key work group. Most children separate well from their parents and carers on arrival at the playgroup and settle into the routine of the session. They collect their name on arrival and make their way to the activities and resources made accessible in the playroom.

Staff are becoming increasingly familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Children are offered a wide variety of play opportunities; they are offered choice and independently access a wide range of resources. This encourages young children to explore the environment and develops their curiosity. There are systems in place for recording children's progress reflecting the 'Birth to three matters' framework and staff make regular observations of activities that children take part in.

Staff provide a stimulating environment for the children which promotes children's ability to make choices and develop their independence. Importance is placed on providing all children with a wide and varied range of play and learning experiences; which for older children encompasses all areas of learning. Staff support and interact positively with children in their play and facilitate their learning effectively. There is good attention paid to developing children's confidence and social skills. Staff assist, support and encourage children's involvement in activities and help children to show consideration to others. As a consequence children are eager to try play and learning experiences, are beginning to learn to share and on occasion work together as a group.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals. The manager has the main responsibility of the task of formulating plans for children's learning. Other staff have regular input on a weekly basis. Staff share the responsibility of organising the daily focus session. They put forward suggestions and ideas on how to deliver play and learning opportunities for the children linked to the themes identified by the manager. The regular involvement in planning and the availability of referral

documentation helps staff to be increasingly familiar with the Foundation Stage. Plans completed detail learning intentions for children, linked to stepping stones and early learning goals. However, plans are not very clear in demonstrating how children are supported with regard to having their individual learning needs met. They are not differentiated to meet the needs of all the children. Therefore, this does not ensure that more able children are sufficiently challenged in their learning. Activities are evaluated and staff observe and record children's attainments. Information collated through observation is used to complete children's progress/assessment records.

Many children recognise their names at registration. Children have access to books which they learn to handle with care. They benefit from free access to books throughout the session and choose to look at books on an individual basis, or seek out the attention of an adult to share a book with. Their interest in books is further developed through routine times of the day when they share a book as a group.

Children have opportunities to explore features of the local environment. For example, they take part in outings to the local shops or visit the local recreational ground. They also make observations of the local environment linked to themes of learning. For example, from the safety of the drive behind the railings of the closed gates they counted the different vehicles observed on the road outside the church when following a transport theme. Children's interest in nature and understanding of the world around them is developed through inclusion in activities such as handling domestic pets and exotic animals. Organised events enable them to view and safely handle animals and insects such as rabbits, snakes, tarantula spiders and centipedes.

Children have good opportunities to use their senses through access to play materials such as sand, paint and play dough. They use their imagination, for example when they dress up in dressing up clothes and when acting out the role of adults cooking dinner in the role play area. Children enthusiastically sing rhymes and songs and join in actions when taking part in music and movement sessions. They play musical instruments and have the opportunity to make their own. Children use tape recorders in the group, however, they have limited access to other electronic equipment to develop their awareness of information and communication technology and how things work.

Children develop a good awareness of mathematics. They are familiar with and sing number songs. Many children count to 10 and above. Children have opportunities to see numerals and shape in the environment. Their interest in numbers and shapes is supported by staff who talk to children routinely about numbers and help children to observe and recognise shapes around them in the playgroup rooms and surrounding environment. Some children are able to identify the shape of objects and items around them. For example, they tell staff that the clock is a circle shape, and the windows are rectangles.

Children receive lots of encouragement from staff to co-operate and work together as a team. As a consequence children learn to show consideration for other children. For example they enjoy group games such as using the parachute and work together to participate in the activity. Children's behaviour is well managed and this results in a largely calm environment, which allows them to maintain appropriate levels of concentration. Children's interest is generally

held during group activities, for example, they sit quietly at key group times. However, during some focus activities and story times, older and more able children can become distracted by other children's behaviour when their attention is not held.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are mostly well behaved and respond to requests staff make of them. They are aware of the routine and know what is expected of them; for example, they help to tidy up toys after they have finished playing with them. Throughout the day children are often praised. Their confidence and self-esteem is well fostered. Children are sometimes selected as helpers to provide them with a sense of achievement and responsibility as part of a programme for managing their behaviour. All children receive praise for their achievements, when they are being helpful, for sharing and displaying kindness to other children. They are rewarded with stickers which they are keen to receive, these are worn home on their clothing and also recorded on charts displayed in the room.

There are no children currently attending with identified learning needs or disabilities. However, through discussion staff demonstrate that children with identified additional needs would be well supported. Staff have a clear understanding of monitoring and assessment and keep parents fully informed and involved in this process. They have processes in place for building working relationships with other professionals involved in the children's care. This ensures consistency of care for the children.

Children develop awareness of their local community through, outings in the local area. For example, they visit the local shops and recreation area. They have access to a meaningful range of resources and activities that promote positive images of disability, race and culture, which assists in promoting children's understanding of diversity and the wider world. They acknowledge and join in activities associated with cultural and religious celebrations such as Christmas, Chinese New Year, Mothers Day, Diwali and Easter. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents are able to share information about their child and their wishes are respected. They have good access to information regarding policies and procedures, as some information is included in the prospectus and full documents are made available to parents on request. Verbal information is exchanged with all parents ensuring that they are kept well informed about their children's care. This promotes consistency of care for the children.

Partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of nursery education is good. Children benefit from the effective sharing of information between parents and staff to enhance their learning. There are good processes in place to keep parents well informed about the learning programme. Information about the Foundation Stage is provided in the handbook. Parents also have access to information about how play and learning experiences provided in the playgroup enables children to work towards the early learning goals. They have access to good information about the activities children have taken part in through photographs available in the reception area. Information is displayed for parents about the themes being covered in the group and they are invited to bring in items to contribute to the theme. This helps to develop

home/playgroup links and enables parents to continue children's learning within the home environment. 'Stocky' a playgroup teddy bear is also sent home with children, particularly during their settling in period as a tool for establishing home/playgroup links. Parents are kept informed of the progress their child makes in the group through discussion with staff at progress meetings which take place at least twice a year. Parents are also provided with a scrap book with photographs and examples of their children's work and an end of year report. This provides them with information about their child's progress and achievements over the year.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Documentation is well organised, as required information relating to staff, parents and children is recorded. Effective systems are in place to promote the confidentiality of information relating to families and staff. Most of the staff employed to work with the children are appropriately qualified, and the required adult to child ratios are maintained. Staff have been appointed to their positions through being known to the group initially in the capacity of parent helpers and have moved from working in the group on a voluntary basis to being employed. Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed on all staff to ensure children are protected. Staff are supported by a small pool of regular volunteers who work under their supervision. Volunteers generally complete tasks such as preparing snacks and clearing up, so that care staff can concentrate on the children. Policies and procedures underpinning the care provided in the group are in place and contribute to the welfare and care of the children who attend.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff work together to identify new ways of providing children with learning experiences and take on board guidance and suggestions from outside agencies who offer the group support. The manager shares specific roles with the staff, who take on responsibilities, enabling them to develop their roles within the setting. There are procedures in place to identify staff training needs, and the manager works alongside staff and offers support. Training is made available to staff, they are able to access external training courses. To improve the quality and standard of the nursery education the setting has taken action to address the recommendations raised at the previous inspection. The manager and staff team share a commitment to improving learning for children. Undertaking completion of the local authority quality framework document has enabled the group to identify their strengths and some areas for improvement. However, the system for evaluating and reviewing the provision for funded education is not comprehensive in order to assist in promoting continual enhancement to the programme for early education.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the group had five recommendations to improve practice: devise and implement a procedure for lost children; ensure children belong to a key group which has consistent staff; conduct a risk assessment on the premises, which is reviewed regularly, identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks; further develop the range of resources promoting diversity; ensure the recording of accidents is confidential and includes necessary detail.

Since the last inspection a procedure for lost children has been formulated and is shared with parents. Children have been allocated to key groups with key members of staff. This has enabled staff to get to know their group of children well. Additional books, resources and dressing up clothes has increased children's access to resources reflecting diversity. Records of accidents are now recorded on separate pages and parents view only those relating to their child. This supports the confidentiality of children's and parents information. A risk assessment of the premises has been conducted and this is regularly reviewed. However, it is not sufficiently comprehensive to ensure that all risks are identified. As a consequence some hazards remain accessible to children. This has been taken forward as a recommendation following this inspection.

At the previous nursery education inspection there were four recommendations made to improve practice: increase independence skills and choices for children and find ways to give children opportunities to develop gross motor skills; strengthen the programme for communication, language and literacy by ensuring children's mark making and writing skills are developed through free play activities and provide a wider range of good quality books; use daily routines and practical activities to help children develop and consolidate their understanding of number; further develop the use of evaluations and monitor teaching.

Since the last inspection, children have been provided with more choice, they are independently able to access additional resources stored in stacker boxes. This promotes children exploration, curiosity and ability to follow their interests. To find further ways to give children opportunities to develop gross motor skills, staff presented a bid for funding to improve the outdoor area. However, they were not successful on this occasion but are willing to persevere in identifying ways of developing the outdoor opportunities for the children on site. Organised visits to the local recreational area provide children with increased opportunities to develop large physical skills through use of the large equipment. Additional materials and writing utensils have been provided for children and these are also used in the role play area. A wider selection of books has been made accessible for children, this enables children to develop an interest in books and learn to handle books carefully. Staff make better use of routine times and practical activities to consolidate children's understanding of number. For example, they talk to children about how many cups are needed for the group of children at snack time. Staff complete evaluations of activities they conduct with children at focus and key group times, this enables them to determine whether activities have met the identified learning intention and allows them to adapt or revisit activities to consolidate children's learning if required.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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.

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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):

- further promote children's health by improving systems in place for hand washing
- develop the range of snacks provided to promote children's awareness of healthy eating
- review risk assessments to ensure that hazards are identified and action is taken to minimise risks, to improve children's safety and security.

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):

- improve planning to ensure that it identifies individual learning needs of the children and review large group time to allow older and more able children to concentrate
- strengthen the planning of activities to promote opportunities for children to access a range of resources to increase their awareness of information and communication technology
- further develop the system for monitoring and evaluating the provision for nursery education.

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