

St Christopher's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY340735
Inspection date	13 June 2007
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	Warden Hill Primary School, Durham Close, CHELTENHAM, Gloucestershire, GL51 3DF
Telephone number	01242 523 827
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Registered person	St Christopher's Playgroup
Type of inspection	Childcare
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

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?

St Christopher's playgroup was registered in 2006. It operates from a classroom within Warden Hill School in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The playgroup is open at this site, from 09.15 to 11.45 for one morning a week during terms one to five, and two mornings a week during term six. Morning and afternoon sessions are offered at the nearby church hall site during the rest of the week.

The group is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children at this site and currently have 29 children on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup employ five members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene because they are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, and after using the toilet. They understand why they do this, for example, "to make them clean" and "to get rid of the germs". Staff discreetly supervise children's

use of toilets to ensure basic hygiene routines are followed, whilst maintaining privacy. Children are provided with good role models by staff who pay close attention to basic hygiene practices such as wiping tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to eating. Staff maintain accident and medication records effectively and have received first aid training, helping to ensure that children are cared for appropriately if they have an accident or become unwell. Information regarding specific medication needs are clearly documented and staff receive training to administer particular medications.

Snack times are pleasant social occasions when children enjoy a variety of fruits and sit together. They are encouraged to learn social skills such as saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Snacks are well presented using colourful bowls and plates. Children's dietary requirements are documented and individual needs met effectively. Children assist in preparing their snack by opening small bottles of milk and inserting straws, although do not have opportunity to prepare fruits. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the session. Children's knowledge of healthy eating is further enhanced through group discussions about 'foods we should eat more of' and 'foods we should eat less of', which are displayed on the wall.

Children's physical development is well supported through a wide range of planned activities which assist in their small and large muscle development. They play outside each day using climbing apparatus, a slide and other outdoor equipment. Children move freely and confidently, demonstrating good spatial awareness when negotiating restricted spaces such as crawling through the caterpillar tunnel. Inside they enjoy many activities which support their small muscle development, such as small construction, drawing and sand play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and parents are greeted by staff each morning and the room is prepared prior to children's arrival. The premises are clean, warm and well maintained. Space is organised effectively to provide a good variety of play opportunities which include table-top games, construction, mark-making and sorting.

Furniture, toys and equipment are in good repair and checked daily before use. There is a good range of resources to ensure children are comfortable and can play and eat together, assisting in developing their social skills. Children can reach their toys and equipment easily. Staff rotate certain toys and activities according to their plans for the day.

Children's safety is very well maintained and proper precautions are taken to promote safety within the premises. For example, children tuck their chairs in when leaving a table and understand this is to prevent others from tripping. However, emergency evacuation procedures have not been practised with the children on the school site. Staff ensure the premises are secure at all times and are vigilant in ensuring the main door is secure when children are present. Outside areas are fenced and secure. Staff supervise all aspects of children's play, very well, including maintaining a detailed record of visitors to the premises. Parents have a pre-arranged code-word to be given to staff if they are unable to personally collect their children.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by good staff awareness of child protection procedures. The current policy clearly outlines their approach to any concerns and all staff receive child protection training to familiarise themselves with the signs and symptoms of abuse.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a varied range of activities during their morning at the school site. The playgroup have their own base room within the school premises where children enjoy activities which support their all round development. For example, they talk about dinosaurs, using reference books for information, sort by colour, size and type, and build using construction sets. At snack times children find their places by recognising their names on cards, and make good attempts at naming their own work at the drawing table. All pre-school children spend time each morning in the reception classes playing alongside reception children. Here they enjoy imaginary play in the space shuttle, drawing and sand play, whilst watching older children follow their class routines. Children benefit from these experiences as it helps them to become familiar with the school buildings, daily routines and school staff, whilst still being supported by their familiar key worker.

Children develop confidence and self-esteem because staff offer meaningful praise for cooperation, provide them with opportunities to make decisions and are interested in what they do and say. They play well together in small groups and are making positive relationships with each other and staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children and parents are welcomed as they arrive at the school site. Children are well known by staff who efficiently record individual details and highlight specific needs to ensure these are met effectively. All toys and resources are easily and equally accessible to all children. Children celebrate a variety of different festivals throughout the year, increasing their awareness of the wider world and different lifestyles. This awareness is further supported by displays and resources around the school premises. Discussion with staff demonstrates a good awareness of caring for children with special needs, although none currently attend the playgroup, for example, working closely with parents and health professionals.

Children are generally well-behaved, although some find it very difficult to concentrate when together in a large group. Staff work hard to involve children and use a variety of behaviour management techniques with varying degrees of success. Staff are calm and consistent and listen carefully to children's concerns, providing reassurance where necessary. For example, one child who was very concerned about having spare clothes in his bag was reassured by the staff member that it was a good idea they were there but was sure they would not be needed.

Parents are offered clear information about all aspects of care provided. Detailed written policies are easily accessible at both playgroup sites. Newsletters provide information about topic work and the group's 'open door' policy enables parents to share in their children's achievements at any time. Daily verbal exchanges and the use of a white board helps to ensure parents are kept fully informed and enabled to maintain a good continuity of care for their children.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. All legally required documentation is in place, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being. Good

regard is given to keeping children's records and personal information confidential. All staff hold appropriate clearance to work with children and minimum ratio requirements are exceeded.

The nursery recruitment, induction and training programme is robust, and a staff appraisal system is in place. The playgroup committee take an active role in the recruitment of new staff and organise fund raising events. Staff are currently taking training to develop their behaviour management skills having acknowledged that current strategies are not always successful.

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

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 staff and children are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures
- consider adopting different strategies to help children listen and concentrate in large group activities.

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