

Christ Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106931
Inspection date	26 February 2008
Inspector	Deborah Jane Starr
Setting Address	Petherton Rd, Hengrove, Bristol, BS14 9BP
Telephone number	01179 754616
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Registered person	Christ 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Christ Church Playgroup was registered in 1965. It is based in designated rooms within the hall of Christ Church in Hengrove, Bristol. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 09:00 to 11:30 and Monday and Thursday from 12:30 to 15:00 during term times.

There are currently 33 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup offers support to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup employs seven members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards an appropriate qualification. An advisory teacher from the local authority supports the group. The playgroup is a charitable, community-based group run by a committee made up of a church member, staff and parent representative.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted. Children follow well-established good hygiene routines. For example, children know to wash their hands after using the toilet and messy play. Staff follow effective procedures and practices that protect children from the spread of illness and risk of cross infection. Children are appropriately cared for if unwell during the session and excluded when sick. Staff follow thorough changing procedures and tables and surfaces are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray after messy play activities and before snacks. Most staff hold a valid paediatric first aid certificate and know how to attend to the needs of children in the event of an accident. Staff follow appropriate procedures for the recording of accidents and administering of medication.

All children enjoy a varied range of physical activities on a daily basis that contribute to their good health and help them develop control and co-ordination of their bodies. Children enjoy running safely and confidently peddle trikes and scooters around obstacles and each other in the designated physical play area. They develop throwing and catching skills using balls. Children develop co-ordination skills when singing action songs. They develop balance and climbing skills when jumping on a low-level trampoline, clambering in, out, up, over and through a tunnel and low level climbing frame. Children safely and effectively use small tools, such as knives and shape cutters when moulding dough, spoons during imaginative play and cookery activities, glue sticks and a variety of paint brushes. Children are starting to take note of bodily changes taking off tops, such as a fleece when warm. Children have limited opportunities for planned physical play that offers sufficient challenge to extend them.

Children develop an understanding of a balanced healthy diet through a selection of snacks of fresh and dried fruit and occasional biscuits. Children's dietary needs are discussed with parents and taken account of. Occasional fruit tasting activities encourage children to experiment and extend their range of tastes and offer opportunities to promote their awareness of the wider world. Children's individual preference for drinks at snack time is respected. A jug of water and cups is placed within sight of children during the session, should they request additional drinks. Children are able to rest according to their needs on floor cushions.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Daily visual checks and adequate written risk assessments promote children's safety. However, hazards identified as a result of accidents to children are not promptly acted upon. Security measures in place, such as the securing of the main entrance doors and procedures for the safe collection of children by authorised persons are effective. Staff promote children's awareness of their own personal safety through guidance and gentle reminders, for instance, when running in the hall and climbing the wooden frame. Staff guide children to use scissors safely. Children regularly practise the clearly displayed evacuation procedures. Children play with and use an adequate range of toys and equipment that is checked, age appropriate and meets their development needs. Children help to keep their play space safe by tidying toys away.

Most staff have a satisfactory understanding of the signs and symptoms of child abuse, however, recently appointed staff are unsure of the range of issues. All staff have a secure understanding of the reporting procedures within the playgroup. Parents are informed of the group's

responsibilities through a written statement in the parent information booklet and the display of local authority procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children arrive happily. Staff sensitively support less confident children to separate from their parents when first joining the group. Staff use their sound understanding of child development to set out resources and offer activities that interest children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals as most staff use their sound understanding of child development, how children learn and adequate knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum appropriately. Staff create a welcoming environment by setting out a varied range of resources that are interesting to children; they are keen to try out new experiences. Some staff use open-ended questioning appropriately to encourage children to develop their own thoughts and ideas. Staff have a broad based knowledge of the children through regular observations of what they know and do. However, these observations are not clearly linked to the stepping stones and are not regularly evaluated. Consequently, children's next steps in learning are not clearly identified as a result of assessment. Planning in place reflects a list of resources rather than activities that consolidate children's learning and identify appropriate challenges for them. A termly focus on each area of learning ensures that activities are balanced across the six areas of learning.

Staff support children appropriately to develop their communication and language skills through the layout of the play area and regular reinforcement of sounds and letters. Children link letter sounds to objects on the project table and familiar objects in the room. Most children recognise the first letter and shape of their own names when matching it against a large banner and a variety of laminated cards. Children spontaneously give meaning to their marks and recognise that print has a purpose. They spontaneously make marks using notebooks and write party invitations to their friends. Children listen with enjoyment to stories and are interested in books, spontaneously choosing them, holding them correctly and pointing to pictures. Children have a positive attitude to investigating and exploring. They are intrigued by new experiences, such as observing the power of magnets to move small objects, such as balls and iron fillings and attach them to other metal objects. Staff at times do not use such spontaneous learning opportunities to support children's learning.

Children are interested in number, recognising number shapes correctly when looking at a weather and date chart and a number sequence when lining up. Children spontaneously refer to their own ages and use mathematical language and concepts to describe size and length. Children recognise pattern and sequence when completing puzzles. Staff support children to link number and objects, for example, when making faces from dough. Children develop independence skills. They make choices from easily accessible resources, request assistance when required and are starting to take responsibility for their own personal care. For example, they choose to play with particular resources, such as a doctors set or hobby horse and put on their own coats at the end of the session; attempting buttons and zips. However, everyday experiences, such as snack time are not used effectively to promote, support and build children's independence or used thoughtfully to promote mathematical thinking and help children develop their understanding of problem solving and comparison.

Children relate well to each other, play co-operatively together and are encouraged to listen and take turns at large group times. Children express their imaginations and re-create their ideas through activities that they enjoy. They use large sheets of cardboard to build a goal area for football and a house. They care for dolls in the home corner and make meals for themselves and others using a variety of props. They spread glue on pre-cut pictures to make invitations for their parents and create pictures using paint.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective working relationships with parents and other agencies identify children's individual needs and achievable targets. This ensures children are appropriately supported and their needs met. Use of routine and sequence charts help children separate from their parents and settle. Parents are very supportive of the staff. They are informed of policies and procedures and their children's daily experiences through access to written statements, an initial information booklet, regular discussion, newsletters and parent notice board. Appropriate systems are in place for the recording of complaints. Parents support the group through a parent rota when needed and offers of help with structural changes to the premises. Children develop an awareness of difference and diversity through occasional activities that include craft and messy play, visitors in authentic clothing and visits to the church. Resources, such as dolls, books, puzzles, imaginative play clothes and some posters reflect positive images of ethnicity and culture.

Clear role modelling, encouragement to be respectful to others and consistent age appropriate strategies used by staff, help children understand what is expected of them. Songs, such as 'Are you sitting' and the use of stickers and certificates effectively promotes positive behaviour and acknowledges children's achievements. Children are proud of their own work, for instance, showing staff and the visiting inspector their completed puzzle.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents gain some understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum through clear written information included within the initial information leaflet and termly newsletters that identify the focus of learning for the next few weeks. Children's progress is shared with parents through informal discussion and by access to their child's learning diary on request. However, as already identified, these records are not regularly evaluated and do not at all times accurately reflect children's next steps. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in activities that contribute to their development and learning, such as the provision of resources for the project table. Opportunities that actively encourage parents to be involved with their own child's on-going learning are few.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Systems in place for the recruitment and checking of staff working directly with children gather the minimum information necessary to ensure their suitability. The playgroup is in breach of regulations as they have not informed Ofsted of all significant changes, for instance, a change of committee members. Induction procedures ensure that staff have sufficient understanding of the policies and procedures that meet the National Standards, as reflected in most aspects of their practice. Documentation is sufficiently organised and maintained confidentially and securely. Consequently overall, children's welfare and care is safeguarded and promoted.

The layout and organisation of the playgroup gives children space to participate in a varied range of activities. They easily access resources and toys set out on low-level tables and on

request from the well-organised storage cupboard. Child-sized tables and chairs enables children to participate and investigate activities comfortably. Displays of posters of numbers, letters and children's own work, contribute to their learning and promotes a sense of belonging.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff meet formally at varying times during term time to discuss activities and the overall focus of children's learning linked to an area of learning. Systems in place for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme for nursery education is not yet fully effective. Planning of resources linked to areas of learning ensures that children are offered a balanced range of activities and experiences. However, regular effective monitoring of children's individual learning diaries is not in place and as a consequence, due to weaknesses identified in the evaluation and planning for individual children's next steps, this limits children's progress in some areas and does not offer sufficient challenges.

The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was requested to make the following improvements. To

ensure that all records and policies relating to day care activities are readily accessible on the premises, available for inspection at all times and are shared with parents. To ensure that a suitable procedure is in place to be followed if a child is lost or uncollected and to make sure that unsafe items, such as drawing pins used to secure displays are safe or inaccessible to children.

These recommendations have been considered and steps taken to improve the provision. Records and policies including procedures for lost and/or uncollected children are accessible and available for inspection. These are shared with parents through an accessible folder. Unsafe items, such as drawing pins are checked and removed where necessary. Consequently, children's safety is promoted and accessibility to relevant documentation improved.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was requested to make the following improvements. To continue to extend staff's understanding of early learning goals to support children's learning through clear links between planning and assessment of their progress in the stepping stones. To plan the use of resources so children can learn through first-hand experiences in exploring, investigating and appropriate calculating. Also, to further develop the challenges for children to gain independence, extend their role-play, and develop skills using small physical equipment.

Some progress has been made with regard to some recommendations. Children have greater opportunities to self select resources through the lay out of the play area. Staff are more aware as to how they are guided by children's interests and support them by offering different props or resources that help extend activities. Opportunities for role play are extended through a wider range of alternative scenarios. Consequently, this offers children increased opportunities to re-enact their experiences and express their imaginations. Children use an increased range of small physical equipment, such as programmable and remote control toys and equipment for cookery activities. Limited progress has been made in all other recommendations and remain issues for improvement as identified in this report.

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):

- take appropriate steps within an agreed timescale to ensure that all identified hazards are minimised
- ensure that all staff have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of children at risk
- ensure that Ofsted is notified of all significant changes
- develop further the systems in place to ensure the suitability of staff working with children.

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):

- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum so that observations of what children know and do are clearly linked to the stepping stones and are regularly evaluated
- develop planning that reflects children's next steps and offers challenges that extend more able children
- increase opportunities for parents to be actively involved with their child's on-going learning
- develop the systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of planning for children's next steps across the six areas of learning.

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