

St Mary's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115372
Inspection date	03 May 2007
Inspector	Beryl Witheridge
Setting Address	St Mary of the Crays, Church Centre, 114 Old Road, Crayford, Kent, DA1 4DZ
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Registered person	The Committee of St Mary's 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Mary's Playgroup opened in 1973 and operates from three rooms in a church hall. It is situated in the town of Crayford, Kent. A maximum of 36 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 67 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 49 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a local catchment area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Of these six staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. There is one member of staff working towards a degree.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are taught about good health routines. They are encouraged to wash their hands before they eat food, after messy play, after going to the toilet and after playing in the garden especially after digging or planting seeds. Staff escort them to the toilets, because of the layout of the building, and remind them to wash their hands to make them clean. Staff also have good hygiene routines and wash their hands regularly. Tables are cleaned with antibacterial sprays to ensure that surfaces are free from germs. Children with infectious conditions do not attend the pre-school. This helps to prevent cross infection. Staff help to promote children's health needs through the written policies and the required accident and medication records. Parents have given written permission for seeking emergency treatment or advice. Children enjoy lots of activities to help promote the physical development such as exercises, physical education and music and movement. They also have use of a large hall if the weather does not allow them to play outside.

Children are encouraged to eat healthy foods. Drinks of water are available throughout the session and they are offered a choice of milk or water at snack time. The snacks provided include fruit such as apples, raisins, oranges, bananas, breadsticks, sandwiches (brown and white bread), jam, marmite, cereals. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are met. Staff are very aware of any specific requirements a child may have and are provided with the correct information on how to deal with these.

Children's physical development is encouraged through the opportunities for outdoor play with suitable resources in their purpose built outdoor play area and the daily opportunities to use this space which encourage their fine motor development. They are able to use such tools as the computer, pens, pencils, scissors, rolling pins, pastry cutters and knives.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to learn and play in warm, welcoming premises which they have sole use of. Their work is proudly displayed on the walls allowing the children to show pride in their achievements. The space is well organised and children are able to move easily from activity to activity, use their imaginations and to have choice about the activities they want to take part in. They also have use of a large hall which allows them to have access to large physical activities when the weather is inclement. They also have their own secure, purpose built outdoor play area. The premises are safe and secure and staff monitor the children as they arrive and leave. Procedures are in place should someone other than the parent/carer be collecting the children. Toys and equipment are checked regularly and cleaned every half term and more often if required. Fire prevention equipment such as extinguishers and fire blankets are in place throughout the building.

Children take part in a half termly emergency evacuation practice; this is carried out over several days to ensure that all children are included. Children are beginning to develop an awareness of how to help keep themselves safe in an emergency. The manager and some staff members have undertaken recent Safeguarding Children training' All staff are required to know the procedures so that they can ensure the children's safety and welfare. However staff are not keeping a clear record of existing injuries or concerns. Staff are aware of their own vulnerability

and the procedures to be followed in the event of an accusation are included in the written policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children come happily into the group, they show an interest in the activities provided, they have eager attitudes to learning and show this through talking to the staff about what they are doing, asking questions and experimenting. Children play together well; they share and negotiate their roles when taking part in role play. Staff support the children by sitting at the table with them and encouraging them such as when making the play dough, they introduce lots of language and ask open ended questions. Some activities are adult led and some are child led. Children have mostly free access to the resources but they can ask staff for something which they cannot reach on the shelves. Activities provided include a painting activity as well as free painting, pegs and boards, dough making, puzzles, computer, doll's house, home corner, book corner, sand, water, physical exercises, outdoor play, number games and cards. Children are able to enjoy social opportunities; they visit the local school and have trips to places of interest such as Godstone Park. Children show a high level of wellbeing and involvement as they play together in the garden; two boys have spades and are 'digging for treasure', they pretend to find hidden objects and talk with 'pirate accents'. Children have a good relationship with staff and each other. There is a lot of talking and fun. Staff know the children well; they have key worker groups but all work closely together and regularly discuss the children's needs and progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a good understanding of how children learn. Staff use the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones when they are planning the activities. Future planning is linked to the next steps for individual children. Children are progressing steadily towards the early learning goals and are making steady progress in relation to their individual starting points. Staff are not always clear about recording the timescales of children's achievements. All staff are involved in the planning; they meet every three weeks to discuss what is needed for their children. They look at the next steps for their keyworker children and these are included in the future planning. The Birth to three matters framework is also incorporated into the planning at this stage. The inclusion of all children is actively planned for. Activities are evaluated at the end of each week. The resources available help to extend children's learning and the staff's own strengths and skills are used to good effect.

Children are becoming independent learners; they confidently select from the toys and activities on offer. They can manage their own personal hygiene and put on their own shoes and coats. Children are beginning to understand and respect each other. Children show an appreciation of books and stories which are freely accessible in a well stocked book corner. They listen to stories and join in eagerly with the staff member as she reads one of their favourite books 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. Children speak confidently to their peers and adults. They listen and take turns when speaking in groups. During role play they negotiate their roles and talk to staff about what they are doing describing their roles and what they are going to do next. Children can link sounds and letters and use jolly phonics; they have computer programs and a letter chart on the wall in the book corner. Children are learning new vocabulary, for example, when making the play dough staff ask them what it feels like and the children use words such as 'squashy and squidgy'. Children learn how to use numbers in everyday situations; they count

the number of children sitting on their table at registration time. They are beginning to represent numbers in various ways, one child is playing a number game; he tests the member of staff to see if she knows her numbers and checks the written numbers to see if she is right, if not he holds up the correct number of fingers to show her what it should have been. Children show that they understand size and shape. They have opportunities to explore capacity through water and sand play, staff support them with language describing capacity.

Children learn about living things through activities such as planting and growing seeds in their garden. Children investigate using their senses; they put the paint on their hands and comment on the feel when it squeezes through their fingers. Children learn about themselves and one another; they look at different festivals and celebrations throughout the year. Children explore the concept of communication with mobile phones, role play and tills. They are very competent with the computer and the use of the mouse. Children's fine motor skills are developing well. They are able to use knives, rollers and cutters well when playing with the play dough, they have good manipulative skills. Children show a good awareness of space and move confidently, imaginatively and safely during physical activities such as when they are pretending to be at the funfair riding on the Merry-Go-Round, they hold hands and walk round in a circle, moving up and down at the same time. Children are provided with and use a range of larger equipment, bikes and scooters which they can ride on in the school playground, plus their own climbing frame and slide in their own garden. Children know their colours and explore a range of texture, shape and form in different dimensions; they make their own play dough and then eagerly play with it using a selection of tools and cutters. Children play with a good variety of resources to promote their creative development, for example role play resources which include dressing up, dolls, action songs, music and movement. Children enjoy singing songs; they have a good repertoire of songs and action rhymes, they have a bag of toys and puppets which they can pick from and then sing a song connected with the item they choose.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the group and staff ensure that they are treated according to their own specific needs. Parents provide staff with any relevant information about the children's backgrounds, their culture or any specific needs there may be. Toys and resources promote positive images of diversity for the children although the supply of resources representing disability is limited. Children learn about different festivals and celebrations throughout the year. They have looked at Chinese New Year, Christmas and Divali. Parents support the children by coming in to talk to them about what the celebrations mean to them and their family. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the group, they are provided with one to one support and their own individual educational plans. Outside agencies are invited into the pre-school to extend the help and support for both children and their families. The staff work closely with the parents to ensure they are meeting the children's needs.

Children have good behavioural standards. House rules have been set but staff rarely discuss these with the children. Staff lead by example and are excellent role models; they discuss any unacceptable behaviour with children in a positive manner and ask them to consider the effect of their behaviour on other children. Children receive praise and encouragement for work well done and for trying hard, this helps to promote their self confidence. Staff discuss any concerns with the parents to help provide continuity of care. Parents feel that they can talk to the staff at any time. Parents are kept well informed about their children through regular newsletters, the policies and procedures and the opportunity to talk to staff at any time.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents receive a welcome pack which includes information about the group, the policies and procedures, the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. Parents receive a newsletter every few weeks. They are invited to parents' evenings where they can meet their child's keyworker, look at the written records and discuss their child's progress. Staff are always available at any time to talk to parents should they need to. The group uses a questionnaire to get parents' views on the pre-school.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are confident, independent and secure within the pre-school. The staff employed within the group undergo an interview and their qualifications are checked before being offered a position; however the procedures are not rigorous enough in areas of previous employment and health checks. There are eight staff employed in the pre-school of whom six hold an early years qualification, one is undertaking further training and all are involved in ongoing training. Staff are first aid trained. Every member of staff has a current Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. The staff regularly risk assess the premises and their use and supervise children at all times. The required documentation and records are in place, including daily attendance records, which show clear arrival and departure times for children. The registration certificate is clearly displayed and the records are all stored confidentially and are readily available for inspection. Staff all know the policies and procedures and use these to ensure the best care for the children.

Leadership and management is good. Children are cared for in an atmosphere that ensures they are happy and settled and able to learn in an environment which is interesting and exciting. The activities provided are planned using the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones. The overall success of the curriculum is clearly assessed and monitored through weekly evaluation of activities and three weekly meetings to discuss children's progress, their ongoing needs and the future planning which involves all staff. The owners verbally induct new staff and identify any relevant training or resources through the probation period and ongoing appraisals. Staff are motivated through their regular staff meetings and their annual self evaluation and appraisal. The group is proactive and committed towards improving the quality of care and education; they received the Pre-school Association Accreditation in 2004. The pre-school receives support from an early years advisory teacher.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was required to keep a record of attendance for all children. All attendances are now recorded along with the times of arrival and departure, if these are different from the norm.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 that all existing injuries or concerns are recorded and signed by parents
- ensure that recruitment and vetting of new staff members is rigorous and 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):

- ensure that staff clearly identify children's progress using the stepping stones and early learning goals

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