



## St Matthews Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101674
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Hilary Elizabeth Tierney
<b>Setting Address</b>	Church Hall, Church Road,Cainscross,Stroud, Glos, GL5 4LH
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Matthews 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 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 Matthews Playgroup operates from St Matthews Church hall, which is to the west of Stroud town centre and close to St Matthews Primary School. The group is managed by a committee of parents. The group use the main hall, entrance hall, kitchen and toilets. They do not have an outside play area, but have a garden patch for planting. Victory Park playing fields are close by, the staff take the children here for outside play.

The playgroup may provide sessional care for 26 children aged from 2 to 5 years. There are currently 39 children on roll, with 17, 3 and 13, 4 year olds who are in receipt of funding. Pre-school sessions run on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 09.00 until 11.30, and Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons from 12.45 until 15.15. Sessions for rising 3 year-olds are offered on Monday and Thursday mornings from 09.00 until 11.30. The group supports children with special needs and do not currently have any children for whom English is an additional language.

The team of 3 staff have recognised childcare qualifications that include National Vocational Qualifications at Level 3, first aid and child protection training, and are supported by duty parents. Support to the group is given by the Early Years Childcare Services and Foundation Stage Consultants.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming environment where they learn how to care about themselves and develop a sense of independence. Children demonstrate a good understanding about the need to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Children may go into the toilets independently and with minimal help from staff.

During snack time children pour their own drinks, and enjoy spreading butter on their toast. They take an active part in helping to put out plates and cups on the tables. Staff are sensitive about when to offer help during this time. Snacks are healthy. Staff are fully aware of individual dietary needs of children and work closely with parents to ensure the correct food is given.

Children's health is protected within the group and there are detailed procedures in place to deal with minor injuries. The necessity to exclude sick children is understood by all staff. Emergency numbers are easily available in case a child becomes ill when at the playgroup and their parents are needed quickly.

Children have good opportunities to explore and test physical control during indoor and outdoor play. Balancing beams are used well indoors so children can use them freely. Regular trips to the local park and school playground develop their outdoor experiences further.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a welcoming environment, where they are made to feel welcome by the staff. The hall is brightly decorated with many displays of children's work around the walls. Resources are easily accessible from the selection put out for them each session. Children are able to move around the room freely and safely as they play because staff have planned the layout of furniture and activities well.

The building is secure and the children are well protected as they play. The doors are locked at all times, and alarms are installed on the fire doors so that the noise would alert staff to anyone leaving the building. When children enter the building in the morning a member of staff is at the main door to greet them and their parents and to ensure no children can leave alone. Emergency evacuation procedures are detailed and practised regularly to ensure children are safe as they play.

Staff supervise the children well at all times, but allow some independence when the children need to visit the toilet and wash their hands. There are detailed procedures in place to keep children safe in the setting and on outings. Staff encourage children to practise road safety when on outings to the local school.

Children are well protected. The staff have good awareness and understanding about the correct child protection procedures to follow if there are any concerns about children in their care.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well and quickly when their parents leave. They run into the group happily and are greeted individually by staff in a caring way. Children access toys and equipment immediately when they enter the playgroup enabling them to feel secure and involved. There is a cosy book corner where children may sit quietly and look at books alone or as a group. Books are changed frequently to ensure children have a good selection to explore. A good variety of toys and equipment is used to ensure children are able to experience all areas of learning.

During the inspection children interacted well. They co-operated together as they played in the home corner, dressed up and played happily. Children show care and concern for each other during the session, for example one child cried during story time, a member of staff offered reassurance. The child was taken away to help set tables for snack time. Later another child asked him if he was sure he was all right.

Children communicate effectively with staff. Staff listen to what children say and respond with clear answers. Praise and encouragement is used effectively and children are very well behaved. Staff show warmth and care towards the children. They are patient and understanding as children develop new skills.

Children socialise well with each other. Visits to the local school at playtime allows them to integrate with older children, brothers and sisters. The children enjoy outings to the local park to allow them time to run, jump, climb and explore.

Nursery Education - The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have good concentration and are eager to take part in all activities. Staff are enthusiastic and motivate children to take part and try various activities during the session. The children listen intently to stories and recount them well. They access a good range of resources that are well chosen by staff, to support their development across all areas of learning. Children make marks readily and freely both on paper and small individual blackboards. Good use of sign language enables children with special

needs to take part in all activities fully and they are progressing well. Although staff plan activities and show children what they expect them to do, they realise that children have their own ideas and they allow them freedom to do the activity in their own way.

Children work well together when they help to tidy up. They pick up a balancing beam as a team and carry it, to the store cupboard. Children gain confidence in developing skills with small tools such as knives when buttering their own toast at snack time. Mathematical language is promoted well with staff using words such as 'big', 'little', 'medium', 'top', 'bottom', 'under' and 'over'. There are some missed opportunities to challenge and increase children's counting skills such as when they help set the table for snacks and at circle time. Staff encourage children to listen to sounds around the room and make their own sounds such as clicking tongues or fingers and tapping the floor. They use good open-ended questions to encourage the children to discuss a forthcoming trip and to think about the sounds the children may hear at the seaside.

A flexible approach to planning with a good balance between adult- and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are very aware of children's needs and interests, they use effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's progress and to plan for the next stages of children's development.

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

The provision is good.

Children understand the boundaries within the playgroup and their behaviour is very good. There is natural, effective use of praise and encouragement by staff. The children co-operate well together and help each other with problems as they play. For example they help each other put on aprons for water play.

Resources are used well to promote children's understanding about the diversity within the community. Children have good opportunities to learn about the world they live in. They take part in regular visits to the adjoining church to help ring the bell that calls people to church. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

There is a good partnership with parents. Through discussion with parents it is evident they are impressed with the range of activities and experiences their children have available to them during sessions. Staff encourage parents to take part in outings and duty within the group. There are regular newsletters produced for them that includes relevant information on activities provided. A notice board keeps parents informed about coming events.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced well by the effective organisation. Leadership and management of the nursery education is good.

Indoor area is well organised to maximise children's learning. Although the outdoor area is small, staff use the room well to develop the children's physical development. Documentation is in order. Registers are kept of children's attendance, but times of staff, duty parents and visitors attendance are not recorded.

Children benefit from the well-qualified and skilled staff. There are effective appraisal systems in place that ensure the group's detailed policies and procedures are consistently applied. Staff constantly evaluate, monitor and improve their care and education. All staff are committed to improvement and development continually. The good quality of the provision means that the playgroup meets the needs of the range of children who attend well.

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

The previous care and nursery education inspections recommended that the playgroup extended the child protection policy to include written procedures to follow in the case of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer and to provide more opportunities for children to make marks and write in free play and to use their number skills throughout the session.

The leader and committee have now developed a detailed child protection policy that includes a procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The staff and play leader have provided opportunities to help children develop their writing skills during free play with easy access to pens, paper and other writing materials. Staff still need to increase the opportunities they provide to extend the children's number skills during the sessions.

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

Since the April 2004 Ofsted have received one complaint. On 4 October 2004 a concern was raised under Standard 1 - Suitable person, Standard 2 - Organisation, Standard 3 - Care, Learning and Play, Standard 7 - Health and Standard 12 - Partnership with parents and carers. The complaint was concerning the playleader's qualifications, staff's care and enthusiasm towards the children, basic hygiene procedures and lack of communication with parents. A visit took place and found that the playleader was suitably qualified. Staff demonstrated enthusiasm and care towards the children, basic hygiene procedures were followed and parents received regular information about the group and details about their child's day. No further action was taken and the provider remains registered.

## **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 records of actual daily attendance for staff, visitors and rota parents are kept.

##### **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):

- increase opportunities for children to use and increase their number skills throughout each session.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)