



St John's Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115370
Inspection date	21 September 2005
Inspector	Jeannette Waring / Christine Lynne Hodge
Setting Address	St. Johns Church, Danson Lane, Welling, Kent, DA16 2BQ
Telephone number	Church office 020 8303
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Registered person	The Committee of St John's Church
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

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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 John's Church Playgroup is a voluntary group, owned by St John's Church. The joint playleaders are responsible to the Parochial Church Council. However, the playleaders have full delegated responsibility for the day to day management of the group. The playgroup has been registered since 1972, it serves families from the surrounding residential area and is a well established community group.

The group operates from the church hall complex which is located on the edge of

Danson Park. They have the use of a large bright hall together with a smaller side room in addition to kitchen and toilet facilities. There is also a fully enclosed outside play area for the children.

The playgroup is registered for a total of 28 children aged from 2 to 5 years. They open from 09:30 to 12:00 noon Monday to Friday during term time.

There are a total of 39 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. Currently 26 children receive funding for nursery education. All of these are 3-year-olds, no 4-year-olds attend at present. Although there are currently no children with special needs or who speak English as an additional language attending, there are effective procedures in place to support such children.

The staff team comprises two joint playleaders, both of whom hold a level three qualification. Of the remaining four staff one is unqualified but experienced, one also holds a level three qualification, one holds a level two and one has almost completed a level two. Additionally the group currently has assistance from three regular student placements and parents help out on a rota.

The setting receives support from the advisory teacher through Bexley Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning about how to stay healthy and are developing an understanding of the importance of good hygiene routines. Staff consistently reinforce messages about hygiene by modelling good practice and through discussion at activities such as cooking. Children are confident and are trusted to go to the toilet by themselves, they know why they wash their hands and one child explained to the inspector it was 'to get rid of germs that might make you sick.' Children are developing good self-care skills and recognise when they are too hot or too cold; they are able to put on and take off their coats when they go out to play in the group's outdoor play area.

Children are developing a positive approach to physical activity. They have very good opportunities to take part in a range activities which promote their physical development in the well organised outdoor play area. Staff plan activities which encourage children to practice climbing, balancing, throwing and catching, using wheeled toys, running, jumping and moving carefully. In addition children are able to take part in spontaneous vigorous activity when they choose to, as whenever possible, children have free access to the outdoor space.

Families are involved in the group's healthy eating policy and provide children with fruit which is taken in daily. This is washed, peeled and sliced by staff and all children enjoy sharing the fruit during refreshment time at the sociable snack bar.

The well maintained accident and medication records, which are shared with parents,

ensure that children's welfare is well supported.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure during the session and there are good routines in place to keep them safe at the start and end of the session. Staff manage to achieve a good balance between allowing children freedom, for example to move between the indoor and outdoor environment or use the toilets un-supervised, and setting safe limits which children understand. This is possible because; staff are constantly vigilant and aware of where children are throughout the session, staff deployment ensures good supervision both indoors and out and because children have simple safety rules which they know and understand.

Children's safety is assured because staff pay good attention to the safety of the premises and equipment and carry out daily routine checks. In addition they undertake a full premises risk assessment annually and have good systems in place for reporting new hazards and minimising any risk.

Children are developing an awareness of how to keep themselves safe and topic work such as Road Safety and Sun Smart week promote this. Children are also involved in the preparation for outings and learn what to do if they should ever get lost.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of their responsibility for keeping children safe from harm. They are aware of the local child protection procedures and their policy sets out a clear procedure to be followed. However, the church procedure, which is also in the groups policy file, is not fully consistent with the group policy.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. Even the youngest children, new to the group, come in happily and settle well to play. Children quickly learn the simple daily routines and this helps them to settle-in easily. A good range of interesting, well planned and purposeful activities are provided and children have the opportunity to move between activities making independent choices. Staff are attentive to children's individual needs and ready to respond to requests for assistance. They respect the children in their care, trust them to behave appropriately, spend time talking and listening to them and encourage them to develop a kind and caring approach to each other. They are able to bring a clear focus to activities while still allowing children scope to explore and experiment with their own ideas. Because staff have such a caring and supportive approach children's self-esteem is nurtured and they grow in confidence.

Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and they set clear boundaries which children understand. Children are encouraged to behave well because staff

remember to praise good behaviour. For example, at circle time when a staff member says 'Thank-you x for sitting and listening - well done'. Children are proud to be praised in this way and other children follow their example.

Staff recognise children's individual strengths and their needs and there are good plans in place to support children with additional needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are happy, motivated and interested in the activities provided. They approach new activities with enthusiasm and, with good support from staff, they concentrate and persevere at more challenging tasks. The majority of activities both indoors and outdoors are well organised and well presented. However, children tend to muddle the floor play provided in the central floor space.

Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and have put in place an effective play programme which provides children with appropriate challenge. The whole staff team demonstrate a good awareness of how children learn and confidently support children's learning in all areas. Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly well supported and staff are skilled at encouraging children to feel confident and proud of their achievements. Staff spend time talking and listening to children, both individually and during group times, consequently children are learning to listen carefully to staff and to each other. They listen attentively to stories and enjoy drawing and painting and making marks in a variety of ways. Staff introduce children to maths through a range of purposeful, practical activities and by routinely introducing mathematical concepts and using mathematical language.

Children learn about the natural world in the outdoor play area; they show interest and wonder as they watch a spider in a web and enjoy activities such as gathering up the fallen leaves. Even very young children show an interest in the group computer and many older children use it proficiently, selecting and playing interesting games. Children's natural curiosity is encouraged and they use their imagination as they create games in the role play area and with the small world toys. Staff encourage children to express their own ideas through art and craft activities and through the use of musical instruments. Children's all round physical development is well supported. Children are able to use a range of tools and small equipment with growing skill and dexterity and they have many opportunities to take part in a range of well planned physical activities in the outdoor play area.

Parents are invited to complete a starting points checklist before their children begin pre-school so that staff have a good understanding of children's skills and abilities from the start. They build on this knowledge by observing children and compiling a record on each child in their key worker group. Information gathered is used to help staff plan next steps for groups of children and informs the record of transfer children take with them into school or nursery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The pre-school is part of a strong church community and the group has a clear Christian ethos, children take part in a daily prayer and celebrate a range of Christian festivals. In addition children are introduced to elements of a range of other cultures and traditions and the group has a good range of play provision which reflects the wider community. Children learn about their local community and the wider world through outings and visitors to the group. Staff take time to get to know individual children and families, they recognise and respect difference and encourage children to show respect and care for each other.

There are good plans in place to provide effective support for children with additional needs. The group has a new special needs co-ordinator who demonstrates an awareness of her role, she has attended her initial training and is keen to undertake further training in order to ensure all children receive good support.

Children's behaviour is very good. Staff have a very positive approach to behaviour management and their kind, caring and patient manner sets children an excellent example. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. This supports children's learning well. Parents have good information about the group before their child starts and they are invited to contribute their knowledge of their child's skills and abilities at this time. Good information is displayed on the notice board including information about the Foundation Stage, the key worker system and the group's weekly plans. Regular newsletters keep parents up to date. Many parents go on group outings with the children and some choose to work alongside staff on a parent rota. This enables parents to share in their children's learning and allows them to extend children's experiences at home. Although there is no formal method in place to ensure that all parents have regular information about their child's progress, parents are aware that they can talk to staff at any time and many make regular enquiries. In addition staff try to ensure that they speak to all parents at least once each term in order to keep them informed about the progress their child is making. All children take home a transfer record when they leave the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff team are well qualified and experienced, an effective staff training programme is in place and this ensures that staff keep abreast of current thinking. Good recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that children are kept safe.

The organisation of the outdoor environment is very good and the indoor space is also generally well planned although the central floor play area tends to become muddled during the session.

All required documentation is in place and generally maintained to a high standard. However, although the register is taken promptly and all children are marked in it, it is not a complete document as absences are not marked and children are not marked

out if they leave early. The group has an effective operational plan which works well in practice, this together with clear policies and procedures and effective weekly planning for children's learning underpins the smooth running of the group. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management is good, the co-leaders share a clear vision for the group underpinned by a strong Christian ethos. They demonstrate a strong commitment to on-going improvement and their passion and drive galvanises and inspires the staff team. All staff work with enthusiasm and sensitivity. There is no system in place to monitor and review the daily programme as a whole. However, staff are encouraged to observe activities and evaluate their effectiveness which enables them to monitor and review practice in these areas.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the group improve children's safety by carrying out a formal risk assessment. A point for consideration was raised during the inspection of nursery education to extend the opportunities for children to explore everyday technology.

Staff now carry out an annual generic risk assessment as provided by their insurance company. In addition they have introduced a system for reporting on new hazards which includes an assessment of the probable risks to children and adults and records actions taken to minimise these risks. These measures have added to the groups ability to promote children's safety.

Following the nursery education inspection staff invited parents and the church community to help them provide more opportunities for children to explore everyday technology. Parents were very supportive and donated items for children to use including a computer. Staff organised a stall at a church fete and raised money to buy a lockable child-size computer desk/cabinet. They also obtained a grant specifically for technology equipment and purchased a range of suitable software. In addition children now use tape recorders and players and various programmable toys regularly and many children now demonstrate a good understanding of how to use everyday technology.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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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):

- ensure that all documentation is reviewed and maintained as required, specifically ensure that the register is a complete document and that the child protection procedures are clear to all.

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):

- review the organisation of the indoor environment in order to ensure that activities currently provided in the central floor space are well organised.

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