

# St Andrews Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	127575
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Margaret Nicholls
<b>Setting Address</b>	Watling Street, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1RF
<b>Telephone number</b>	07979092993
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Andrews 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 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?

St Andrews Playgroup has been registered since 1977. It is managed by a committee. Registration is for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. The playgroup operates from a church hall in Dartford, Kent. There are currently 56 children, aged from two to four years, on roll. Of these 25 are funded for early years education. The setting can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30 until 12.00 every day and from 12.15 until 14.45 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

All members of staff have appropriate early qualifications or are very experienced. All staff hold a current first aid certificate. The setting receives support from an Early Years Advisor from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about personal hygiene and good health practices through every day routines. Staff reinforce hand washing before eating and after messy play. Staff ensure play surfaces, toys and resources are clean using antibacterial solutions when necessary. Toilets are checked throughout the session and tissues are available at child height. Children are protected from infectious illness because they do not attend when they are sick. Clear and effective medical records are maintained and staff have current qualification in first aid for babies and young children. Contact numbers are held securely and parents are informed of procedures should a child become ill or require emergency treatment.

Children are offered healthy foods at snack time. Fresh drinking water is available at all times. They choose milk or blackcurrant squash to drink and raisins, apple, grapes and cucumber to eat. However, staff hand out name cards and pour out drinks so that children do not have opportunities to gain independent skills. Children are not encouraged to contribute as adults stand by waiting to take empty beakers away.

Children enjoy daily planned physical activity in the small secure fenced garden. They climb onto the wooden decking and duck in and out of the play house. Children enthusiastically jump with two feet, push buggies around the hall and garden, thump drums and beat time to simple songs or action rhymes. They know when they need to rest and sit on the play mats to play quietly or look at books. Children develop dexterity and coordination as they roll the play dough into candles for a cake, use their finger tips to paint, draw with crayons or chalk circles on a board.

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

The provision is good.

Children play safely because staff understand health and safety practises from an induction procedure. They check resources and the premises before children arrive. Children make independent choices from equipment that is easily accessible and attractively presented. Areas of activity such as a work station with tools, home corner, construction toys, play dough, glue and chalking activities are clearly defined. Children move easily, negotiating space between child height tables and chairs. Doors are secure and visitors details are recorded. There is good ventilation and natural light. Children do not access hazardous items that are stored in the kitchen.

Children develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe because staff reinforce the behaviour they want. Children know to keep toys tidy, to protect their clothes and to sit still on child size chairs so they will not wobble. Fire safety recommendations are in place and fire drills are practised regularly so children know where to stand in the event of an emergency. An evacuation procedure and fire notice is displayed. Public liability insurance is current.

Children are safeguarded because staff know the procedures to follow should they need to record any concerns. Staff receive training via an induction procedure and national qualifications. Attendance at refresher training is indicated as part of the training plan. Local and national contact numbers are available. A written statement explains the process to be followed should

there be an allegation of abuse by a member of staff or other adult. Parents are informed of the providers' professional responsibilities through a written policy and procedure.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play happily and their individual needs are met because they can access a range of resources and planned activities. They push buggies with baby dolls round the hall or re-arrange items in the home corner. Children listen closely to staff as they engage children in quiet conversation as they play. Children are beginning to make marks although there are insufficient opportunities for writing for a variety of purposes. Children competently negotiate between furniture and activities in the hall and climb on and off the wooden decking in the secure garden. They develop confidence as staff praise them for wanted behaviour or successful achievements such as using their finger tips to paint leaves in orange, brown and green colours. Children are beginning to recognise numbers and enjoy pouring sand on to the sand wheel. Children enjoy social activities such as singing or music and movement. They listen closely to the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Children learn about the seasons with natural articles such as leaves. They develop dexterity and coordination as they press buttons on calculators or mobile phones, use a magnetic stick to pull magnets along a groove or drag a variety of combs to shape patterns in a sand tray.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Experienced and qualified staff work as a team to incorporate elements of the Birth to three matters framework and the early years goals of the Foundation Stage. Staff record observations and make assessments to monitor whole group and individual children's progress, although a starting point of children's achievements prior to entering the playgroup is not recorded. Planning clearly notes differing abilities and achievements. Staff encourage children to think, asking questions and giving them time to consider their answers.

Children learn from planned activities and the introduction of new words such as 'squidgy', 'sticky' and 'soft' when discussing craft materials. Children are fascinated by the glue dripping from their fingers and the marks of their painted fingertips on their pictures. They use chalk or crayons at table easels but have few opportunities to write for a variety of purposes at more general activities such as the home corner or the workbench. Adults provide specific activities to introduce size and number but do not reinforce these concepts throughout the session. Children learn about their community and the wider world through annual events and seasonal celebrations. They have access to communication equipment such as mobile phones and a laptop. They learn to press buttons and to cancel the numbers on a calculator. Children develop a sense of time as they discuss buying presents for relatives. They know its time to tidy up when the bell is rung and that they are collected from playgroup 'after the singing'.

Children show they care for others as they push the baby dolls in the buggies. They take responsibility for their own actions when they sweep up the sand voluntarily. They learn about living things as they observe and draw worms in leaves. They move confidently and competently as they play in the secure garden. They develop dexterity and coordination as they connect blocks from construction resources or move the direction arrow on the laptop. Overall the provision plans and provides activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

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

The provision is good.

Children develop self respect and a sense of belonging as they are welcomed by name. They have access to a range of resources, including toys, games, and posters that provide positive images of cultural and physical diversity. They learn about their community and the wider world from activities that reflect local events and national celebrations. Families provide information about their individual preferences and cultural requirements. Staff liaise with other professionals and are suitably qualified to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children are good natured and quickly adapt to the group rules because staff give simple, consistent explanations for wanted behaviour. Children learn to sit at the table to eat. They know not to run because they may trip over. They learn to treat toys and equipment with respect. Children are observant and remind each other to say please or thank you and learn to be well mannered. Children share resources and play happily together because staff provide a calm atmosphere.

The partnership with parents is good. Children receive continuity of care because written agreements are in place and individual details are recorded. Information is shared daily between parents and staff. Parents report their children are 'settling well' and enjoy coming to the group. Parents describe staff as 'helpful' and 'easy to talk to.' Parents receive information about the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage in an introductory pack that also identifies staff and their qualifications. The provider takes positive steps to ensure parents are informed of all relevant policies and procedures. This includes a complaints procedure and contact details of the regulatory body. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children play happily and are beginning to learn in a calm atmosphere with experienced and qualified adults. They explore a range of materials and create with imagination. They have little opportunity to develop their growing independence or contribute during snack time. The registered provider ensures adults working with staff are suitable to do so. An induction and appraisal procedure is in place and progressive professional development is encouraged. Parents are aware of the range of qualifications and professional roles of the staff team which are listed in the playgroup documents. The registration certificate is displayed. Required documents are held. The operational plan is effective and reflects the Early Childhood Environment Ratings Scales system adopted in Kent.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are encouraged and supported in their planning using the Birth to three matters framework and the stepping stones of the early years goals of the Foundation Stage. Whole group activities are reviewed at monthly team meetings. However, children do not have opportunities to make marks for a variety of purposes and staff do not reinforce children's understanding of number consistently. Parents are provided with information of their child's progress daily, on request and each term although their knowledge of their child's achievements prior to starting playgroup is not sought as a starting point for assessment. St. Andrews Playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed recommendations to monitor staff's understanding of health and safety issues, to initiate an operational plan and to update policies. Children play safely as staff are inducted to health and safety procedures. Parents are clearly informed of the regulator's contact details, policies are current and an operational plan includes staff training requirements.

## **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.

## **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 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):

- consider ways to encourage children's independence at snack time and assist them to contribute in the process

### **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):

- encourage children's understanding of mathematical language identifying shapes, position and number throughout each session
- encourage children to make marks for a variety of purposes throughout all play areas
- consider the introduction of a system to record children's achievements from parent's knowledge of their child's learning prior to starting playgroup so that a starting point for assessment is established.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)