

# Sutton Methodist Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	510001
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Margaret Bryant
<b>Setting Address</b>	Church Street, Sutton, Kingston upon Hull, HU7 4TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	07905 907552
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Barbara Berry
<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?

Sutton Methodist Playgroup has been registered since 1970. It is a church run group and operates within rooms belonging to the church. The premises are in Sutton, a suburb of Hull, some five miles east of the city centre. There is an enclosed outdoor area to the front of the building, with supervised access to a small area at the back of the church.

The playgroup is registered to take a total of 19 children. Currently there are 34 children on roll, 22 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The playgroup also supports children with additional needs and learning difficulties. The playgroup is open each weekday morning from 09.10 till 11.40. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays it operates in the afternoon from 12.30 till 15.00.

The group have five members of staff, including the manager, and all hold an appropriate childcare qualification. Most of the staff have worked at the playgroup for a minimum of six years. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and received accreditation from them in 2005.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's health and well-being is promoted well due to the positive steps in place to protect them from possible risk of cross infection. The premises are cleaned regularly and all toys and resources in use by them are clean. Children's awareness of good hygiene practices is raised through discussion and pictorial information, such as hand washing posters in the cloakroom areas. Most children wash their hands after using the toilet and before their snack. Younger children receive gentle reminders from staff when they forget. Children learn about eating healthily and decide for themselves when they will have their snack. They help themselves to fresh and dried fruit and use individual spoons provided to place this into their own bowls. They also help themselves to a drink of either milk or water. Sometimes children need support to do this but generally all children manage this very well. Drinking water is readily available throughout the session. Children's social skills are encouraged as they sit with their friends at the table to eat their snack. Children sometimes grow salad items such as cress and eat this in the sandwiches they make for their snack.

Children are helped to understand that eating healthily is good for them. They also learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies and that it is good for them to keep fit. They enjoy many opportunities for physical play and move freely with pleasure and confidence. They show respect for one another's personal space as they move around both indoors and outdoors. They also show increasing control and good hand-eye coordination as they carefully use scissors with which to cut their paper. They also use small nets well to capture fish in the water in which they play.

Most staff hold current first aid certificates and are confident to deal with emergencies which may arise. Parents are made aware of the playgroup's policies for sickness and illness which protects all children's health. Accident records are clear and show parents are informed of these. Arrangements in place for medication meet with regulation also.

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

The provision is good.

Staff take extreme care with children's safety and deploy themselves well as children and their parents arrive and depart from the playgroup. Children happily arrive at the playgroup and receive a very warm welcome from staff which helps ensure they easily settle. Children demonstrate an awareness of how to keep safe when staff talk to them collectively about emergency evacuation procedures. They know they must stop what they are doing and that they have to leave the building quickly. Fire officers visit the playgroup and help increase their awareness about the dangers of fire through discussion and use of videos. Records show fire drills take place, however, one has not been carried out with new children this term.

Children feel justly proud as they talk about their pictures and craftwork, much of which is on display. Children play with safe and suitable toys and resources which are checked regularly for their continued safe use. The playgroup have sole use of the premises during hours of operation and children freely access not only the outdoor area but also the toilet facilities. Supervision of children by staff takes into account their developing independence and rights to have their dignity and privacy respected. Risk assessments in place ensure any possible risk to children's safety are identified and minimised. Written permission is in place from parents

to allow staff to take children on outings. Children understand about road safety when on outings as there are careful measures in place and discussions with staff beforehand.

Staff show, through their practises with children, that the welfare, safety and protection of children is paramount. There is a written statement about the arrangements in place for the safeguarding of children. This includes the procedures to be followed in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect. Staff show a sound knowledge of this which is based around local child protection procedures. All staff attend regular training in child protection and the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. This ensures children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded. The playgroup, however, do not have a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from having a broad range of activities and play opportunities available which develops their play and learning. The use of outdoors throughout most of the sessions provides children with continuous play opportunities. They enjoy the sense of freedom this brings as they independently decide whether they go outdoors or stay inside. They really enjoy being creative, initiating their own play and being able to really express themselves. For example, outdoors children fetched large pieces of paper which they put on the ground. They took off their shoes and chalked around their feet. Other children saw what they were doing and joined in. The supportive and caring staff do not intervene in children's play at these times, unless they are asked to do so, or it is purposeful to extend children's learning. Organised group sessions allow children a balance of both active and relaxation times which helps develop their self confidence in front of others. Relaxation times also introduce children to classical music which they enjoy.

Sometimes children are asked to be really quiet. All children's skills of concentration are tested and their ability to listen carefully to instructions. For example, during circle time staff introduced them to a small teddy whom they told children was fast asleep. They were asked to pass him around their circle, to their friends in turn, and be really quiet so as not to wake him. Some children giggled as staff told them what to do. However, they managed the task really well, with the utmost care and with no sound at all. Once this task was completed staff quickly whispered to children their thanks but asked them to still keep very quiet as the teddy was still fast asleep. They were then introduced to a more difficult task as they were given a hand-held bell. They had to repeat the actions of before but ensure they didn't allow the bell to ring. Again children did this very well and staff continued to whisper as they gave praise to children for their efforts. They consulted children about whether it was now time to wake the teddy and children collectively whispered their answer of, 'yes'. The staff member immediately rang the bell loudly and pretended to have awoken the teddy. Children really laughed and were pleased with themselves for performing this task so well.

Staff recognise the importance of children being able to express their imagination and creativity. For example, a recent 'messy play' day was a huge success. Staff encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning and many attended and joined their children in a wide range of activities. Children guided their parents in how to play with the different materials and to follow their lead which they did. Photographs show everyone having a good time. Children enjoy a variety of readily available musical instruments and enjoy listening to the different sounds they make. They also really enjoy dancing. Some children decide to dance on their own to staff and their friends. They feel really proud as their friends and staff clap them when they complete their dancing. Staff plan using the 'Birth to three' framework for children under three

years who attend the group. They begin to compile individual files around this with photographs as evidence which shows children's progression.

#### Nursery Education:

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff build on the information they initially gather from parents about what their children know and can do. The planning of the curriculum, although not directly linked to the 'Curriculum guidance to the foundation stage', is clearly understood by all staff. It links well to the foundation stage, however, and covers all areas of learning and individual stepping stones within these. Staff use written observations of individual children as they plan which ensures all children's learning is carefully considered. Planning includes topics which link to themes and these reinforce messages through the week to help children learn. Through careful planning and consideration for children's abilities all children make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Children's interest in numbers is encouraged through the provision of an environment which is rich in numbers and print. Throughout their play, the songs they sing and staff intervention children's interest in numbers and counting is extended. Staff encourage children's confidence as they encourage children to join in mathematical activities. They help children learn about 'more than' and 'less than' as they play with counters. They also count with staff these counters as they stack them against their corresponding numbers. Children differentiate well between colours as they put away their counters into the different sections. Some children spend long periods of time as they play side by side and build towers with bricks of different sizes. They concentrate well and show sustained interest as they carefully balance them in different ways to make the highest tower.

Children show a good knowledge of shapes. When talking about shapes they sometimes make associations to the outside world as they realise the characteristics they have in common. For example, when children draw stars they remember about those they see in the sky when it is dark outside. Children show curiosity and interest as they are introduced to the world in which they live. They make visits to local shops, learn about the things they sell and about the different roles people have in life. On walks around the local area staff help children take a real interest in their environment and make connections between this and their home life. They help them notice road signs, houses and buildings of different sizes, and talk about the pets people have inside their homes. On return to playgroup they help children recall about what they saw. They discuss their outing and use different materials to construct three-dimensional models of the houses, shops and road signs.

Children really show a real sense of belonging at the playgroup and relate well to all members of staff as well as to one another. They seek out others to share experiences, use the available props to support their role play and spontaneously imitate adults. For example, they dress up in costumes and use their imaginations well as they take their dolls on shopping trips. Their friends do cooking with play pots and pans and have conversations together on their telephones. Children sit very quietly and listen to stories with increasing attention and make links with home life and their own first-hand experiences. For example, the story title of 'Splash' initiated conversations with children as staff asked them where they can splash. This generated conversation about water which staff linked to children's past experiences at the seaside. They talked to children about what they wear as they paddle in the sea. They also talked about how many fish may be in the water and asked children if they recall the crabs they made at an earlier session. From this staff clearly know how much children learn from the opportunities they provide.

Children talk freely about their home lives and enjoy a whole repertoire of familiar songs with actions which link to their own experiences. For example, they excitedly sing and create movements as they become trains on tracks. Their vocabulary is extended through the songs as they are instructed to go forwards, backwards and change direction as they go along the track. Children have lots of opportunities throughout their play to talk about what they are doing. They also benefit from the many opportunities to make marks on paper. Older children recognise their names, write them quite well on the pictures they draw and paint and know the sounds of the letters of their names. Younger children draw around the dotted lines to make their names and begin to recognise the first letter of their name and how it sounds.

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

The provision is good.

All children feel very much included in the playgroup. Their individual differences are acknowledged and valued by kind and caring staff. Staff show commitment in ensuring the environment promotes equality of opportunity and where all children are equally important. This ensures all children make good progress, including those children who have individual learning difficulties and additional needs. As a result all children are very happy and contented in the group and fully enjoy all aspects of the playgroup's activities. Children gain an understanding of other cultures and beliefs as they learn about other countries and their ways of life. They have the availability of a wide range of multicultural resources which reflect positive images of culture, ethnicity and disability. Photographs show children experimenting with chopsticks as they eat noodles and photographs also show them dancing around dressed collectively as a very colourful Chinese dragon. They also enjoy tie-dyeing as they talk about the bright costumes some people wear and where this method originates from. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

Staff provide good role models for children in how to behave and get along together. They recognise and acknowledge children have a range of emotions and feelings. Through positive praise and encouragement they help all children develop their self-esteem, want to do well and get along together with their friends. Parents are closely involved in the care their children receive and there is a very good exchange of information systems in place. This ensures a mutually trusting and supportive partnership with parents, which helps ensure children's utmost sense and feeling of well-being. Parents are consulted regularly through questionnaires which they complete. Completed, end of term questionnaires show parents really appreciate the staff who guide and support their children's learning well. The detailed, informative playgroup handbook includes many of the group's operational policies and procedures, for their reference when they wish.

Partnership with parents is good. Those parents whose children are in receipt of nursery education funding, receive detailed, written information and explanation about the six areas of learning. They are consulted primarily about what their children already know and complete a form for staff information about this. This ensures staff understand about children's progress and development as they commence nursery education. It includes: questions about children's knowledge of shapes; their counting and writing abilities and about their independence skills. Staff can build on this information immediately and progress children's learning from day one. Parents receive reports each term about how their children are making progress in all areas of learning. They also are invited to look at their children's achievement folders, which show how their progress is measured, through the stepping stones, whenever they wish.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a playgroup which is very well organised. Most staff have the experience, qualifications and training to meet children's needs effectively. The majority have worked in the playgroup for a minimum of six years and know children and their families very well. Many parents have had more than one child attend the playgroup over the years. Space is organised extremely well and allows for children to freely and independently access a wide range of resources, both indoors and outdoors. Staff are deployed with careful consideration. This ensures they are available to help and facilitate children's learning and supervise them for reasons of safety. Children really enjoy independently making decisions about what they do. It helps them feel confident and good about themselves.

Documentation, as required by regulation, is all in place, supported by many operational policies and procedures. Staff are all familiar with these which help protect children's health, safety and welfare. Confidentiality of information is respected as all records are kept locked away when not in use. Recruitment systems are based to date on the employment of staff, previously being parent helpers or students on placement. The manager ensures staff are suitable to be in the proximity of children and there are records in place which show this.

Leadership and management are good. The manager who works in the setting, also oversees its operation. She is very committed to the care and education of children and works hard in support of her staff in the work they do. The manager ensures staff feel trusted and valued as she recognises their individual strengths and skills. She assigns them roles and responsibilities accordingly which ensures that children are appropriately and well cared for. The manager also supports their professional development through the training she helps provide. As well as working alongside staff in their work with children, she regularly checks the planning and children's individual achievement files. She understands the planning and ensures children's individual development is in accordance with the 'Curriculum guidance to the foundation stage'. She meets formally with staff at meetings, at least on a quarterly basis. Professional relationships are in place with parents who fully appreciate the work the playgroup staff do in helping their children achieve in their learning. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the time of the last inspection there were three recommendations made and these were as follows: ensure drinking water is available for children at all times; provide activities for the outdoor area and hall and plan and provide appropriate activities that develop children's concentration skills.

The playgroup now have drinking water available for children who help themselves whenever they wish. Along with improved use of the outdoors and expansion of activities for physical play outdoors and in the hall, children's health and well-being is safeguarded appropriately. Staff involve children in many activities which help them develop their skills of concentration and detail of which is included in this report, with examples.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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**

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 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):

- consideration be given to provide more opportunities for children to take part in regular fire drills
- obtain a copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

#### **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):

- further develop planning to show how it clearly links to the 'Curriculum guidance to the foundation stage'.

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)