

Christ The King Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 322471 |
| Inspection date | 20 November 2007 |
| Inspector | Margaret Patricia Mellor |
| Setting Address | Christ The king School, Meadway, Wavertree, Liverpool, Merseyside, L15 7LZ |
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| Registered person | Christ The King 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?

Christ The King Playgroup was registered in 1983. It is committee run and operates in Christ The King School situated in the Wavertree area of Liverpool. Children use a classroom for their care, learning and play. They share access to a secure, fully enclosed outdoor play area. It primarily serves children living in and around the local community.

The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 25 children aged from two to under five years at any one time. It is open from Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00 during term time only. There are 33 children on roll aged from two to four years. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. It supports children with learning difficulties and children who have English as a second language.

The playgroup employs seven staff to work with the children. All staff work part time and six staff have an early years qualification. They receive support from Sure Start Services of Liverpool Children's Services and an early years teacher advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted generally well because staff provide a wide range of healthy snack options. They enjoy fresh fruit or crunchy vegetables everyday, increasing their awareness of a range of different tastes and textures. Staff are keen to share healthy eating ideas with the children through discussions and practical activities, for instance, a teddy bears picnic when they make their own salad sandwiches. Children have a drink with their snack but water is not freely available at other times for them to quench their thirst. Staff follow effective procedures for sharing information about children's dietary needs, therefore parents' wishes are respected and children stay healthy.

Children are cared for in a warm and comfortable environment, which meets their needs very well. They develop their awareness of simple personal hygiene through their playgroup routine. They gain independence, as they put nose tissues in the bin and talk confidently about how hand washing helps to get rid of germs. Children consolidate their awareness, as they sing rhymes or bath the dolls and through planned activities, such as hygiene week and visits from the dental hygienist. Staff themselves are well informed of healthcare issues, for instance, wiping down surfaces, dealing with cuts and cleaning the toys. This also helps to prevent the spread of cross infection, promoting children's wellbeing.

Children's health is safeguarded well. There are three staff who have a relevant first aid certificate and the first aid box is kept fully stocked, so that children's minor injuries are dealt with effectively. They store medication in an accessible place out of children's reach and act in children's best interests when they are ill. This is well supported by detailed medication records and a sick child policy. Staff help to protect children from the harmful rays of the sun, ensuring that they use sun creams, wear hats and play in the shade on hot days.

Children's interest in a healthy lifestyle is nurtured and encouraged. They love to be active and negotiate space well, whilst developing their coordination and spatial awareness skills. They respond with gusto, as they run in the fresh air, splash in puddles, push or ride on wheeled toys and do obstacle courses. They have plenty of fun, playing circle games and joining in the weekly sports sessions where they learn to hop, skip and balance on beams. Children relish mark making, doing puzzles, cutting with scissors and lacing cards, promoting their fine motor skills through fun, play and learning experiences. They are able to be active or restful, according to their respective needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and with confidence in the playgroup. There are good safety arrangements in place. Staff vigilantly monitor access to the premises, which is well supported by visitors records and effective procedures for the collection of children in an emergency. All the necessary safety equipment is in place and the fire equipment and portable appliances are regularly checked. Staff carry out a daily visual check of the premises, to effectively address any areas of concern. They store toys with small pieces out of children's reach and follow appropriate health and safety procedures for checking the play materials. Children enjoy a variety of safe challenges on the portable toys and large play equipment in the secure outdoor play area. There

are effective procedures for keeping children safe and well, whilst enjoying outings. Therefore, minimising the risk of children accidentally injuring themselves.

Children are cared for in a well maintained environment. Cleaning systems are organised to reduce disruption to children. The play room affords children plenty of space and natural light. Staff creatively organise the environment, allowing children to freely and safely access the activities. Children play with a good range of toys that are suitable for their age, whilst stimulating enjoyment. They gain independence as they confidently self-select play materials that interest them from the tables, trays and toy boxes at child height. Staff encourage children's cooperation and participation through effective use of group games and resources, in particular the parachute, balls and hoops. Children relax in comfort with their friends because the furniture is suitable for their needs.

Children begin to learn aspects of personal safety. They regularly practise what to do in the event of a fire and staff gently remind them about picking up toys. Staff give clear explanations to children, for instance, they may trip and hurt themselves. Children build on their awareness of how to keep themselves safe through planned activities. They relish visits from people, for example, a train driver, when they listen to stories about not playing on railway lines. Children's wellbeing is further assured because there is a designated child protection coordinator. They have accessed safeguarding training and have a copy of the local booklet 'Your responsibilities if you have a concern about a child'. They demonstrate a strong understanding of the procedure to follow should they wish to report a concern, therefore the wellbeing of children in their care is a high priority.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are clearly relaxed and at ease in the playgroup, promoting their personal, social and emotional development. Younger children gain confidence, as they begin to play sociably alongside one another and with each other, whilst staff are close at hand for reassurance. Children are gaining confidence, as they build relationships with their peers and staff, who are attentive as they talk, listen and play with the children. They are keen to engage staff in their activities, for instance, as they play in the sand. They happily play in small groups with their friends. Children show a good awareness of how to behave and keep themselves healthy and safe.

Children have plenty of fun in the playgroup and are progressing well in all areas of their development. This is supported well because staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework, and observation and assessment records to promote children's learning and development. Younger children begin to concentrate, for instance, putting simple puzzles together. They enjoy singing rhymes with actions and love to look at picture books. They begin to develop a sense of 'me, myself and I'. They smile at their reflection in the mirror, respond to their name and paint their self-image on paper plates. They are gaining control of their physical needs, for instance, going to the toilet or getting dressed. They confidently ask simple questions, such as 'can I have' or 'why'. They frequently match colour to colour when playing with the cars and count from one to five when stacking blocks. Staff consolidate children's learning through repetition, for instance, shapes or colours, whilst playing with blocks.

Children are involved in a range of fun, play opportunities, which actively engages their interests. They eagerly choose whether to play in the home area, crayon, look at books, play in the sand or with the small world toys. They begin to explore using their senses when listening to music,

tasting fruit and respond gleefully, when feeling the different natural resources on the investigation table. They discuss the smell and texture of the gloop type powder, both before and after it is mixed. Children's early years experiences are further enhanced through weekly sports sessions and day trips.

Nursery Education.

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Staff are very knowledgeable about how children learn, the Foundation Stage and six areas of learning. They provide a wide range of activities, appropriate for the age and ability of children attending. Activities are well planned and sometimes topic based, providing children with a varied and stimulating programme. Staff evaluate to monitor the learning outcomes and use observation effectively, to assess the children's progress and to track their development through the stepping stones. However, assessments are not fully used to inform future plans.

Staff creatively organise the environment with a good balance of activities, allowing for both active play and relaxation. Children are supported well in small groups. Staff enthusiastically motivate the children's learning, judging when to become actively involved in their learning and when to allow them to independently explore. During group activities, staff give clear and concise instructions. They explain how many spoons of powder are needed to make the gloop and the rules of the game, when playing dice games. Staff show interest in what children do and say. They ask about the pictures they draw and what they make during construction.

Children are happy, highly motivated and involved in their activities. They relate well to each other and adults, demonstrating good levels of independence for their age and level of maturity. They self-register as they arrive, put their shoes on and take turns to help at snack time. They concentrate well and persist in tasks to achieve outcomes, for instance, putting puzzles together. During planned activities, children count and develop good mathematical skills, showing a keen interest in numerals. When baking, staff explain how long the biscuits need to be in the oven. They demonstrate time with the clock, helping children to recognise numerals. They confidently count to 10 or more when sorting toys in boxes and as they play number games. Children listen to simple instructions, as they learn to sequence pegs to create patterns or problem solve, for instance, grouping bears in sizes. However, staff are not consistently providing children with opportunities to attempt simple calculations in everyday routines.

Children become confident communicators. They initiate conversation with adults and chat fondly about their home life and what they do at playgroup. They have access to a good range of books for enjoyment and competently hold books the right way up as they turn the pages. They consolidate their learning, that print carries meaning through displayed words and captions. Many opportunities are provided for children to practise their writing skills and mark making, with free access to writing materials and paper. More able children write from left to right, as they do shopping lists. Children recognise their own name and sometimes the names of others.

Children have fun as they develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Their curiosity and investigation skills are promoted well through interesting activities provided by staff. They learn about living things as they examine bugs at the wildflower centre with magnifying glasses. They listen with interest to the story about the life cycle of the caterpillar and how it changes to a butterfly. They build on their learning as they spontaneously examine natural or made objects on the investigation table. Children have plenty of fun as they play with toy telephones, cash registers and calculators. A computer is also available for them to use at any time, promoting their hand-eye coordination through fun, learning experiences.

They competently manoeuvre the mouse to click on shapes. They develop a good appreciation of the wider community, through the toys they play with and the festivals they celebrate. Children enjoy visits to places of interest, for instance, the farm and they talk excitedly about feeding the goats.

Children's creative skills are promoted well. They are encouraged to freely express their own ideas and feelings through art and craft. They free paint at the easel, make caterpillars out of pom-poms, cut hand prints they paint to make a tree and respond with gusto when playing in the sand or water. They love to decorate biscuits they bake and respond gleefully, as they spontaneously dress up or pretend play in the home area, building on their creativity. They have a strong sense of belonging and are proud of their achievements, which they eagerly share with others. Children happily show adults their displayed paintings, fostering their self esteem and a welcoming environment for themselves and their parents.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's needs are met very well. New children are introduced to the group because adults recognise that this may help them move between home and the new setting. They are given the opportunity to freely explore their environment and become familiar with the routine at their own pace. Parents are provided with a welcome pack about the activities as part of the enrolment procedures. There is good ongoing sharing of information about the children. Staff take time to chat to parents as they arrive and newsletters keep them up to date with developments. Parents comment very positively about their children's care, activities and relationships with staff. They are particularly pleased with their children's end of year progress reports and information about forthcoming topics. They willingly support with activities, such as day trips to the farm or bringing things in from home for the colour or investigation table. Children's continuity and the quality of care offered is fostered through this meaningful relationship between home and the playgroup.

Partnership with parents of the nursery education is good. There is written information for parents about the children's learning programme and early learning goals. Information about the Foundation Stage and children's learning is also discussed informally. Parents are aware of their children's development records and sometimes look at them. There are open days for parents of children in receipt of the nursery education grant to meet with staff, encouraging parental involvement in their children's learning.

Children are happy and content. They are highly valued and their individuality is respected. Staff have a good understanding of learning difficulties and disabilities. This sometimes involves them in working in close partnership with parents or other professionals and accessing specialist training, which is helping to meet all the children's needs. Children themselves begin to develop positive attitudes towards others. They play with different nationality dolls, dress up in African clothes, push dolls in wheelchairs, do puzzles and look at books reflecting positive images. They enjoy celebrating special events in their own lives and learn about other cultures through festivals, such as Chinese New Year when they make luck red envelopes. Children attend from different family backgrounds, further promoting their awareness of diversity and the world around them.

Children's self esteem is nurtured in a very positive environment, where they are encouraged to feel good about themselves. They happily select activities, which helps to make the environment relaxed, bright and attractive to the them. Staff manage the children's behaviour

well, providing good role models. They are very attentive, encouraging polite interaction and children to express their interests and talk about what they are doing. Children begin to develop good social skills and learn what is expected of them, fostering their self esteem. During discussions, they talk about how kind hands do many things, such as hug or wave. At snack time, children are very courteous as they spontaneously say 'please' or 'thank you' and whilst playing, they happily take turns. Younger children are developing the concept of sharing and gain independence, as they help to tidy away the toys. They are well occupied and very involved in their activities, resulting in them behaving very well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, comfortable and well equipped environment. There are written policies, which are understood by staff and work well in practice. Children's wellbeing is safeguarded through effective systems for the recruitment, induction and supervision of adults who care for the children. There is written confirmation that staff are vetted and effective procedures, so that non-vetted persons are not left unattended with children. Staff have accessed training, such as first aid, risk assessment and safeguarding, which also helps to provide an effective service for children. All the necessary regulatory daily documentation is in place, stored with regard for confidentiality and made available for inspection. However, the complaints records, whilst none are noted, are not in line with new guidance.

Children benefit from good adult support through the experience of an established and qualified staff team. They are cared for in a family group setting and every child has a named key worker, contributing to children's happiness and sense of security. Staffing ratios exceed requirements, affording children good levels of support and helping to meet all their needs. Staff enthusiastically motivate the children's learning and creatively organise the environment. There is a good balance of activities, allowing for both active play and relaxation, assisting children to develop their independence and create friendships. Children gain confidence and have plenty of fun, pursuing activities that appeal to them with their friends.

The quality of leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager and staff work very well together, which is reflected in the children's happiness, strong sense of belonging, confidence and independence. There is a strong commitment to improving the care and education for all children. The manager effectively monitors the activity plans and organises staff meetings and appraisal sessions. Staff regularly attend training courses, for instance, 'Every Child Matters', 'Foundation Stage' and 'Observation and Assessment'. Children are involved in purposeful activities, enhanced by staff's knowledge of child development and how children learn. Weekly planning times and regular team meetings helps staff to share ideas. Staff continually evaluate what they are doing and set actions to improve practice. Children's continuity of care and learning is nurtured through the regular sharing of information with parents.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection, two recommendations were raised to meet the National Standards and to improve the quality of care. These referred to organisation. They have ensured that all staff have a relevant police check, introduced several new policies and organised a manageable

operational plan. One recommendation was also raised to improve the standards in nursery education. They have dated children's work, to more effectively track their development, therefore safeguarding children and improving the quality of care and nursery education offered.

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

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):

- make drinking water freely available to children
- review the complaints records.

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):

- improve opportunities for children to attempt simple addition and subtraction in every day routines
- review planning to show how children's assessment records are used to inform future plans.

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