

Methodist Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Unique Reference Number | 251572 |
| Inspection date | 28 November 2007 |
| Inspector | Sarah Johnson |
| Setting Address | Church Hall, Camps Road, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 8HF |
| Telephone number | 07887 654622 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Methodist Church 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?

Methodist Church Pre-School was registered in 1994. It is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and representatives from the Methodist Church. It operates from the Methodist Church hall in Haverhill. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 during school term times only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area and attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently supports a number of children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and two members of staff are working towards additional qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit greatly from daily opportunities to access the fresh air and the outdoor environment whatever the weather. In particular, they put on their Wellington boots before going outside to play in their cardboard box den and to blow bubbles which they chase as they float away. In addition, they have good opportunities to climb, balance and develop their awareness of space as they jump on the small trampoline and confidently use bicycles and scooters.

Staff follow good procedures to ensure children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment and provide regular opportunities for children to learn about the importance of personal hygiene. For example, staff supervise children as they wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet, initiating conversations with the children about washing their hands effectively. As a result, children understand that washing their hands helps to keep germs at bay. Children are well-protected from the risk of cross-infection as they are provided with liquid soap, individual paper towels and staff are vigilant to ensure that children do not share water during hand washing. Good documentation is maintained to record accidents or any medication administered to children and all staff are trained in first aid for young children, ensuring that they are well cared for in the event of a medical emergency or accidental injury.

Children develop a very good understanding of healthy eating. They choose from a healthy range of snacks including pieces of fruit and vegetables sticks, which are prepared appropriately by staff who have complete training in food hygiene. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the session for children to readily access, ensuring they remain well-hydrated. Whilst enjoying their snack within a sociable atmosphere, children confidently talk about eating five pieces of fruit or vegetables each day in order to grow strong and they explain the importance of brushing their teeth after eating sugary foods. Children's dietary needs are given high regard as all staff are made fully aware of any relevant information about children's allergies provided by parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and benefit from a stimulating, child-friendly and accessible play space, which the staff work hard to set up attractively each day before the children arrive. The space is organised effectively to ensure children can freely access table top activities and a large adjoining room, offering ample space for children to engage in physical play and music and movement activities. They have very good access to a wide variety of toys, resources and equipment which meet their interests and offer good levels of challenge. Children are well aware of the resources available to them and feel comfortable when requesting additional resources from the large storage cupboard. The daily use of the outdoor learning environment promotes children's learning by utilising a variety of resources and experiences to reinforce their learning. For example, children spend time experimenting as they pour water down a tube and exploring as they play in the snow during the Winter months.

There are good systems in place to ensure children are safe on the premises. These include an accurate record of visitors and very good supervision of children at all times. In particular, the procedure for the collection of children has been carefully thought out as staff closely monitor the release of children to ensure they are only collected by those who are authorised to do so.

Daily risk assessments are carried out by competent staff and they show good awareness of the need to minimise any hazards which arise during sessions, therefore promoting children's safety further. All the required fire safety precautions are in place to protect children from the risk of fire and staff practise fire drills with the children each half term to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire. Children experience meaningful opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety as staff introduce a pedestrian crossing when they are using ride-one toys and talk about the dangers of matches when lighting the candles on a birthday cake.

All staff have accessed training to ensure they are aware of their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children and consequently they have good understanding of the procedure to follow should they have a concern about the welfare of any of the children. There is a clear written policy for child protection available and additional information is displayed for easy reference by all staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the time they spend at the pre-school. They are happy, confident and interested as they engage in a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities. They arrive happy as they are greeted by cheerful staff who are interested in hearing their news and joining them in their play. Warm relationships are evident as staff are calm and caring towards the children and their parents. For example, staff take time to find out about events in children's lives such as family celebrations and hospital visits. They help children to prepare for these situations by engaging in relevant role play situations which familiarise children with what to expect.

Flexible settling in procedures work very well, as children are given as much time as they need to settle at their own pace. As a result, they develop good levels of confidence when exploring new experiences and beginning to join in with the group with the sensitive support of staff. Children are supported further to settle as they are encouraged to lead their own play throughout the session and are offered alternative activities when they do not wish to participate in adult-led group activities. For example, children are encouraged to share books with the staff when they become unsettled during a rhyme activity with the whole group.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They plan and deliver a broad and balanced curriculum which allows children to learn from activities which they initiate as they follow their own interests. As a result, children make good progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Effective systems are in place to ensure that the staff are aware of each child's individual progress. For example, staff record ongoing short observations of children's development and these are reviewed during planning meetings to ensure future planning is tailored to the next steps in learning for individual children. These observations form the basis of the children's individual assessment files, along with a list of the stepping stones which is highlighted and dated to record children's ongoing achievements.

Pre-school sessions are structured loosely around daily routines such as snack time, outside play and whole group activities. Topics such as 'senses' and 'healthy eating' provide a basis for activities which offer first-hand experiences in the real world. For example, children meet a dentist who visits the pre-school to talk to the children about brushing their teeth and staff make the most of an incidental opportunity when they invite the children to watch a delivery of building materials. Children's learning is supported further as staff put time, resources and

the accommodation to effective use. However, the area designated for sharing books is not designed to maximise children's comfort and interest in accessing and enjoying books. Consequently, this area is underused and children's interest in books is not fully promoted.

Teaching methods are effective in helping children to consolidate and extend their learning. For example, staff introduce meaning to children's physical play as they encourage them to queue up to pay for their petrol at the garage. Staff are effectively deployed and spend all their time directly involved with the children, ensuring that they are fully engaged in worthwhile and productive activities at all times. As a result, children very rarely become unsettled or feel the need to be disruptive.

Children are making sense of the world around them by investigating and exploring through first hand experiences in an interesting environment. They investigate aspects of the living world with all of their senses. For example, they use magnifying glasses to search for spiders and make observations about their number of legs and movement. Children experience good opportunities to use everyday technology to support their learning such as calculators, telephones and keyboards. They spend some time completing construction activities as they connect small magnetic rods to build towers, being careful to balance them to prevent them from falling over. Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities that help them to develop their skills when using small apparatus, tools and equipment. They safely use scissors to cut pictures from birthday cards and more able children are able to cut pieces of wool without support. Children show a developing awareness of the effects of activity on their bodies as they independently remove their jumpers when they feel hot.

Children are learning about connections and relationships in numbers, shapes and measures. They recognise numerals as they count the corresponding number objects into trays. They use mathematical language such as bigger and smaller when comparing the length of pieces of string and talk about adding more cheese to the scales when weighing ingredients during a cooking activity. They demonstrate good counting skills as they count the pegs they have placed on a pegboard and this activity is extended when staff challenge them to count backwards from five. Children enjoy being creative, expressing their own ideas and thoughts through art, music, dance and imaginative play. They use realistic resources to support their role play such as plastic hammers and saws which they use to mend their ride-on toys. Children have excellent opportunities to build a repertoire of songs as they enjoy frequent song and rhymes sessions with their friends. In addition, they explore the different sounds of a wide range of musical instruments including a piano and instruments from around the world. Staff use puppets to help children to follow the beat and to tap out simple repeated rhythms.

Children demonstrate developing self care skills when pouring their own drinks at snack time and persevering with pulling on their Wellington boots before playing outside. They form good relationships with their peers as they demonstrate good awareness of their role in relationships. For example, they use their negotiation skills to work in partnership when tidying up building bricks and helping each other to carry larger blocks. Children are developing their competencies in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They recognise their own names in print when self-registering and some children attempt to write their name onto their creative work when encouraged by staff. However, children's enjoyment and experience of an increasing range of books is limited as they are not offered an sufficiently inviting and comfortable book area to share books. Children independently write for a purpose as they write letters in their play and post these in the pre-school post box.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy spending their time with each other and the staff. They feel valued as they celebrate their birthdays by sitting on the birthday chair while their friends sing 'Happy Birthday' and count the candles on their birthday cake. A good range of resources ensure children develop an awareness of diversity and the wider world. For example, children dress up in traditional Indian clothing, talk about people who use hearing aids and listen to a parent who visits to play an Indian musical instrument.

Children from a variety of backgrounds and those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all aspects of the setting and are sensitively supported to ensure their needs are met. Staff have undertaken relevant training courses to enable them to support children effectively and to comply with the requirements of the code of practice, including an 'Autism Awareness' workshop and training in supporting children's speech and language development. Children who have English as an additional language settle well and develop good levels of confidence because staff take time to find out about their needs through working with their parents and seeking advice from other professionals. For example, staff use different methods of communication to suit each child such as using picture cards and body language to help children to develop at their own individual pace.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They behave very well as they respond positively to the happy, relaxed and calm atmosphere created by the staff. For example, the consistent use of praise and encouragement helps to build children's self-esteem and staff are always close by to ensure clear boundaries are reinforced throughout the session. As a result, children demonstrate good awareness of the need to be considerate of others as they remind each other to say please and thank you. Children experience purposeful opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own. They celebrate festivals including Chinese New Year, as they learn dragon dances and sample traditional foods when a parent visits the pre-school to cook Chinese food.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from the positive partnership that the staff foster with their parents. For example, staff offer a welcoming approach where parents feel comfortable to stay with their children for a short while at the beginning of the session and to share information about children changing needs. Although parents are provided with good information relating to how the setting operates and the policies and procedures, only limited information is provided about the Foundation Stage. Parents are informed that they are welcome to view their children's assessment records when their children first join the setting. However, ongoing opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's assessment records or to become actively involved in their children's learning are not fully maximised. As a result, children's learning and ability to progress are not fully promoted. Parents offer positive comments about the setting, which include compliments relating to the approachable manner of staff and their children's safety and progress whilst at the setting. A complaints policy is fully available to parents, which ensures they are aware of the procedure to follow should they wish to raise a complaint within the setting. However, children's welfare is potentially compromised as the policy does not include the correct details for parents to use should they wish to refer their complaint to Ofsted.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by well qualified and suitable staff who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibility in meeting children's individual needs. Children are safeguarded by sound recruitment and vetting procedures, ensuring they are never left alone with adults who have not been suitably vetted. Students and volunteers are given clear written guidance about their roles and are supervised by staff, ensuring children's safety. All the required documentation and records are in good order to support children's welfare and development. The operational plan is organised effectively so that it shows how the setting operates on a daily basis and much of this information is displayed to ensure it is fully accessible to staff and parents. Paperwork is stored securely on site, ensuring children's information remains confidential.

The sessions are well-organised to offer a relaxed atmosphere and arrangements for staff deployment positively support children's enjoyment and ability to take an active part in all aspects of the setting. The high adult to child ratios ensure children have a good amount of direct attention and are reassured that adults are always nearby to offer support. Staff have a good working knowledge of the National Standards and how to promote good outcomes for children.

The leadership and management is good. The relationship between the staff team and management committee is effective and all have a very clear agreed vision for the setting as a whole. Regular access to training and ongoing review of policies and procedures supports the good organisation of the setting and ensures that the provision of good quality nursery education is maintained. Staff work very well together as a happy and close team, with everyone aware of their roles and responsibilities within the group. For example, children experience consistency in the care and education they receive as all staff are involved in contributing to the assessment of children's learning and the planning of adult-led activities. The setting welcomes support from advisors at the local authority and this advice, along with the staff's evaluation of adult-led activities, ensures that the quality of teaching is continuously monitored and evaluated. Children benefit from the staff's commitment to ongoing improvement, as they are willing to trial new ideas and initiatives and fully support any staff who wish to undertake training to build on their professional development.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provider was asked to ensure that registration arrangements show when children, staff and visitors are present. Daily attendance of children, staff and visitors is now recorded in line with requirements which contributes positively to children's safety and well-being.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to further develop the assessments and planning so that planning in all areas of learning builds on what individual children know, understand and can do. Staff have developed effective systems for recording children's starting points in learning and ongoing observations of their development. These are used to adapt and extend future activities to meet the needs of individual children. As a result, children benefit from staff who are clearly intuitive of their individual progress and they are supported to move on to the next steps in their learning.

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 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):

- update the written complaints procedure to include the current contact address and telephone number for Ofsted as the regulator.

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 improve the book area to encourage children's interest and enjoyment of a range of books
- further develop opportunities for parents to be partners in their children's learning and to contribute to records about their child's progress and achievements.

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