

St Peters Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127625
Inspection date	10 March 2008
Inspector	Linda Patricia Coccia

Setting Address	The O'Sullivan Centre, 63 West Street, SITTINGBOURNE, Kent, ME10 1AN
Telephone number	01795 424864
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Registered person	St Peters 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?

St Peter's Playgroup opened in 1983 and operates from two rooms in a church hall. It is situated in the town of Sittingbourne, Kent. A maximum of 32 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 12.00 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 39 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. Of these 25 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The nursery currently supports a few children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also supports a couple of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs seven staff of whom six, including the supervisor, hold appropriate early years qualifications to NVQ level III or above.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a range of good procedures which promote their health. The toilets are clean and well maintained and children are proficient in hand washing routines. Boxes of tissues are placed around the room so that children may help themselves when they need to. The sick child policy contains procedures relating to children being taken ill when on the premises, but it does not include information about exclusions due to childhood illnesses to prevent cross infection. All regulatory paperwork such as the accident and medication records are in place and are well maintained. Children are protected from cross infection.

Children are offered breakfast and a mid-morning snack. At breakfast, children have the choice of cereal or toast. Toast tends to be everyone's favourite and children are encouraged to spread their own butter and jam. At snack time they are offered a healthy range of fruit and finger vegetables. Child-helpers pour the drinks for the other children who queue up for their choice of milk or juices. The group has a nominated food hygiene officer, who considers children's allergies and looks for other healthy food options to offer to the children. Drinking water is available to the children throughout the session. Children are offered food which is healthy and nutritious.

Children enjoy a good range of physical play activities. As outdoor play is not readily available, staff ensure that children engage in indoor activities. Children happily work as a team whilst playing with the parachute. They proficiently ride on space hoppers and take turns to be Simon whilst playing Simon Says. The children also occasionally use a large climbing frame with suitably positioned safety mats. Children enjoy their physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use two rooms which are well lit with plenty of daylight. This gives the rooms a bright, airy feel with a cheerful atmosphere. The two large areas are utilised well with messy play and table top toys in one area and more physical activities in the other. There are good security procedures in place to ensure children stay on the premises. The accident book is regularly consulted for safety assessments to ensure accidents are not occurring in a particular area. The toys are of good quality, well maintained and most of them are easily available to the children.

Children occasionally visit the other playgroup and the church on the same site, for which parent's written permissions are obtained. The group has a good written emergency evacuation procedure. Fire fighting equipment is readily available to staff. The church committee arrange for the equipment to be checked annually. The emergency drills are recorded but the procedures are only practised once per term. This means that not all the children have the opportunity to participate if it is not their day to attend or if they are off sick. Overall, children are kept safe.

Children are protected by a comprehensive safeguarding children policy which includes references to confidential record keeping, referral procedures and advising parents of their rights. There are separate procedures for dealing with any allegations made against staff. Staff have a good understanding of their role in protecting children and all existing injuries to children are recorded. The group have a nominated child protection officer who has recently attended an up-dated

training course and who has cascaded the training on to other staff members. Children's well being is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed each morning by smiling staff, who know children well and who greet them with appropriate enquiries about themselves and their families. Parents are involved in the daily registration procedures and help their children find their names and hang up their coats. When children have problems separating from their parents or carers, they are comforted by staff. Children are confident and play with a purpose. All the children play with all the activities. Staff are very aware that the two year olds need different care strategies and have different needs. They make good use of the Birth to three matters framework to provide these, such as, providing additional toilet training routines and nurturing their creative abilities to become competent learners. Children happily move around the room selecting the activities they want to play with. They interact well with staff as they use messy play activities or do table top puzzles. They enjoy adult led activities such as lotto games and particularly enjoy the closeness of one-to-one storytelling in the book area. Children develop good relationships with staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They operate a key worker system and regularly carry out observations on their key children as well as on others. The written observation records include photographic evidence of the children's activities and progress. Staff evaluate the children's progress and identify the children's 'next steps' on 'post it' notes for the activity planning. However, the activity plans do not reflect the information contained on the 'post it' notes and staff are unable to easily identify which children they need to target in order to aid their progress. Also, the planning does not show any differentiation between the learning expectations of the different age abilities of the children.

The children in receipt of Nursery Education funding get a good grounding in all the areas of learning and are making good progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

Children make good use of the home corner as they shop for pretend food and prepare meals for their dollies. They show they are proficient in self care as they wipe their baby's nose, and talk about themselves and their experiences to imaginary people on the telephone.

Children can count. Even the youngest know some numbers by rote. Older children can identify numbers out of sequence and proficiently count from 1-10. Whilst playing in the sand tray, children discuss with staff about the amount of sand it takes to fill a bucket, and engage in activities for weighing and measuring. Children gain a knowledge and understanding of the world as they use construction tools such as play drills and saws to pretend to mend things. They ably use telephones and calculators in their everyday play and many of them can operate the mouse and ably interact with the suitable educational programmes on the laptop computer. The younger three year olds usually ask for help from staff.

Children are very creative and use a good range of craft activities each day. They use paint, gluing and sticking to create items which they take home. They investigate the properties of shaving foam discovering that it can be moulded or written in. The group has a wealth of

photographic evidence of children enjoying creative play. Children are also creative with the group's full size organ. They enjoy pushing the buttons and levers and with the aid of the rhythm programmes make a variety of musical sounds. Children engage in a range of activities which promote communication language and literacy. Mark making equipment is placed in different areas for children to make lists or notes. On the mark making table children use pens, pencils and paper with additional envelopes and a post box to encourage them to write to their friends. They enjoy selecting books from the book corner and either looking at the pictures themselves or sharing a story with a friend. The four year olds are able to identify the letters in their own names and often attempt to write it for themselves.

Children are becoming proficient at controlling their bodies as they navigate the large climbing apparatus, They ably climb the rope netting at one end and navigate the bridge to the other side. They creatively move to music, pretending to tip toe or march as well as moving like snakes, or monkeys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from a variety of different backgrounds and abilities attend the group. They are involved in a good range of activities which help them learn about different people and festivals from around the world. They see and use good positive images of equality each time they attend. For example, the play food contain poppadums, breads and fruits from different countries and the books and small world figures show people from different racial backgrounds, abilities and religions. All children use all toys regardless of gender and ability. The group's fully trained Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is responsible for identifying children who may have learning difficulties or disabilities. She supports the children and their families and works closely with parents and other health professionals to ensure suitable care is provided.

Children are well behaved, play well together, share toys and show concern for each other. The group's good behaviour management policy gives parents written details of the strategies which staff use to handle children. It also promotes the use of discipline both at home and at playgroup and the relationship between the two. Staff use the strategies very well and deal with children's adverse behaviour in a calm and soothing manner. Staff reward children with praise throughout the session, and respect children by saying please and thank you and encouraging children to be polite and thoughtful to each other. Children play within well defined boundaries. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from good procedures which enable staff to consult regularly with parents. The group operates an open door policy. Parents are able to stay with their children, settle them in and play if they want to. They see up to date information posted on the parent notice board and receive regular newsletters. However, some of the information contained in the prospectus is contradictory and the information about admissions, also in the prospectus, is limited. Parents report they are very happy with the care given to their children and find staff caring and trustworthy. Parents report that they are regularly requested to sign accident and incident books and can request individual care for their children. Children benefit from continuity of care.

Partnership with parents is good.

Parents whose children are in receipt of Nursery Education funding report that they are happy with their children's progress in the Foundation Stage. Many of them are aware that the staff

use a curriculum for the children but are unaware that it is the Foundation Stage with different areas of learning. Parents have good access to their children's progress records and can ask to see them at any time. They like the regular discussions they have with their child's key workers. They regularly get involved in their children's learning as they help children search for items for the group's alphabet and numerical wall friezes and send in items of interest for discussion. They have even been involved in tossing pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are looked after by staff who are suitably vetted and who hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Some staff hold current paediatric first aid certificates. The group follows the church's rigorous and robust recruitment and vetting procedures. Students and volunteers are also covered by a good range of procedures which ensure they are aware of the group's confidentiality and child protection procedures. Children are cared for by experienced staff.

The group displays its registration document on the parent notice board. The operational plan is available to parents and is comprehensive in the range of policies and procedures it contains. The attendance record is well maintained and clearly shows children's arrival and departure times. All other regulatory paperwork is in place. Children's records are well maintained and confidential. The group note which visitors need to see them, and require them to sign a declaration of confidentiality. Staff ensure that children's information is confidentially maintained and stored in lockable cabinets. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Leadership and management is good. The Church management committee employ the staff and allow the experienced supervisor and deputy, sufficient autonomy to ensure the group is run efficiently and is self-maintaining. The toys and equipment used by children are of good quality and well maintained through regular cleaning and evaluation procedures. Staffing ratios are high and most staff have been in post for at least two years. Some for many more. They are encouraged to attend regular training courses to maintain their expertise. The supervisor and deputy regularly monitor the delivery of the Foundation Stage. They are currently working with the Early Years Advisory Teacher to adapt the planning systems to make them more efficient. They regularly monitor their service with parents in the form of questionnaires and act upon the comments they receive.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider received a number of recommendations to improve the service. They were; to ensure all accident records are confidential; to make the complaints procedures and contact details for Ofsted more accessible to parents; to provide evidence of qualification clarification for both supervisor and deputy; to provide parents and staff with local child protection information and finally, to update staff details with full qualification and training details.

Since then, the provider has implemented a new complaints procedure and log. Parents have been provided with information about the child protection procedures and accident records are now confidential. The supervisor has also included all staff qualification and training certificates in the group's registration folder which parents may view.

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.

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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 any written information provided for parents contains correct details and ensure that written procedures have sufficient detail for staff to implement them effectively
- ensure each child has the opportunity to participate in the emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis

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):

- ensure parents receive written information about the Foundation Stage
- ensure activity plans clearly show the next steps for identified children and also show details of learning differentiation between children of different ages and abilities

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