

St James' Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	140458
Inspection date	19 November 2007
Inspector	Anahita Aderianwalla
Setting Address	171 Fortis Green Road, Muswell Hill, London, N10 3BG
Telephone number	(0208) 444-4033
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Registered person	St. James 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 James' Playgroup has been registered since 1967. It is a voluntary, management committee led sessional day care provision. It operates from church facilities, also known as Birchwood Centre, in Muswell Hill, in the London borough of Haringey. The setting has access to a large hall and adult toilet area on the ground floor, and a second play room with kitchenette/office area and a children's toilet area on the first floor. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The group serves the local community.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time.

The group opens five mornings a week and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, term time only. Sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15.

Children attend on a sessional basis. There are currently 24 children on the roll of these 16 children receive funding for nursery education.

The group employs five members of staff. All the staff hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications.

The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about health and hygiene through discussion, daily routines, from posters displayed, and from visitors to the setting, such as from the dental hygienist. Children understand that they need to wash their hands to get rid of germs as they independently wash their hands after playing in the sand pit, and the gluing area. Staff work in accordance with the setting's policies and procedures to ensure children are protected from illness and infection. All staff are first aid trained and children receive appropriate care if they have an accident or require medication. They ensure that all areas and resources used by children are clean.

Children develop a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle at the setting. They have daily opportunities for play outside in the fresh air, where they have fun as they take part in a variety of physical activities which help them develop healthy bodies. They demonstrate good balance skills as they ride around on scooters and good coordination skills as they carefully manoeuvre wheeled toys around each other. They practise throwing and kicking balls and delight in the freedom to run around. Children have access to a lovely vegetable garden, where children learn to grow and name vegetables and fruit like, 'juicy tomatoes'. They learn about healthy eating at snack time where they sit together and cut their own fruit to eat, accompanied by milk. The pre-school offer children a variety of snacks during the week, for example, snacks like a stir fry with vegetables children had chopped up for Chinese new year and fruit salads. The weekly snack menu is displayed for parents. Throughout sessions children freely access water when thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the bright and colourfully decorated play spaces. Children choose from a wide selection of toys and resources, which are checked regularly for safety and cleanliness, and maintained in good condition. Children are safe in emergencies, as evacuation procedures are practised regularly throughout the year, so that new children learn the routine. They stay safe on routine outings, as all venues and travel arrangements are risk assessed.

Children are protected from harm because the setting follow sensible policies and procedures that ensure children play in a safe and secure environment. Their security is very well promoted, both indoors and outside. The main door is kept locked at all times, the outside gate has a phone entry system, and is secure, ensuring children and staff remain safe when playing in the garden. Children are safeguarded from abuse or neglect because staff know how to implement the setting's child protection policy. Visitors sign in and out and there are appropriate systems for ensuring that authorised adults only collect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at the setting. All children engage eagerly in the range of interesting activities that are provided. For example, they play with water to learn about capacity or with corn flour to learn about texture and explore their senses. Children's

experiences are enhanced by the skilful interaction of the qualified members of staff who use their knowledge and understanding of how children learn to plan activities that meet children's overall developmental needs. They expertly encourage young children to make connections in their learning when they help them to recognise numbers and count the ducks, when playing computer games. They extend children's language skills sensitively, refining their attempts at new words and listening with interest so that young children become confident communicators. Managers use the Birth to three matters framework effectively to plan activities that are appropriate to young children's stage of development and to help them to learn.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals. They learn in a stimulating environment. Pictures, posters and children's artwork decorate the walls. They access a good range of activities during free-flow play to support all areas of learning inside and out. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. All staff have received training in this area and staff make good use of the curriculum guidance to ensure the planning is effective. All staff take an active part in the planning and take responsibility on a rota basis to organise the weekly focus activity. Staff complete detailed development profiles on all children, however staff do not always plan for the next steps. As a result, staff are unable to identify where each child is on the stepping stones towards the early learning goals and what their next stage of learning is. Targets and differentiation of activities are not recorded and staff rely on their working knowledge. This means that some aspects of children's learning and development may be missed.

Children are happy and confident. They are gaining in their independence as they take responsibility for their personal hygiene and eagerly put on their coats to play outside. Children learn about sharing and taking turns. They happily share the sea life animals in the water tray and at the sticking and gluing table. All children help to tidy up showing that they take responsibility for their environment. Children have good opportunities to develop an understanding of print carrying meaning. They identify, with support from staff, their name cards on arrival as they self register themselves. Children begin to learn about sounds and letters as staff link initial letter sounds to words, for example, C for corn flour. Children spontaneously use the mark making table and hold pencils with increasing skill, colour neatly between the lines and some older children are able to write their own names on their work.

Children are familiar with numbers. Displays around the room give them constant reminders and help them to understand what numbers look like in print. Children count confidently up to 17 and can link spoken and written numbers. Children recognise shapes within their environment as they proudly explain to adults that the blocks are curved and rectangles. Parents are encouraged to talk to the children about their own cultures and beliefs and this term the children learn about Divali. Children have daily opportunities to use information and communication technology to support their learning. Some children enjoy exploring the programmable toys, and many children use the cassette radio and mike.

Children have daily opportunities to play outside. The free-flow inside and out gives them the freedom to make choices. Children enjoy riding on bikes, they particularly like the tricycle, where one person pedals the bike while carrying two passengers. They develop their physical skills as they use paint brushes and pencils and manipulate corn flour with increasing skill. They independently cut fruits for snack time. Children play with curiosity and independence. They constantly use their imagination during role play and while playing with resources in the water tray. Children enjoy listening and dancing to music and sing favourite rhyme songs. Children

are encouraged to learn songs from around the world, and can sing in Mandarin. The smiles on their faces show how much they enjoy playing together.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are very happy at the playgroup and play very amicably together. They happily share resources, such as train tracks, and paper at the sticking and gluing table indoors and wheeled toys outside. They have good relationships with each other and merrily cycle around outside on bikes and trikes. Children develop an understanding of diversity and differences through exposure to positive images displayed within the pre-school and through planned topic work learning about the wider world. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The pre-school has relevant policies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including an inclusion policy, and works with outside agencies, as appropriate, to meet children's individual needs. Children behave very well at the pre-school and have a good understanding of what is expected of them and is reinforced by staff, if they need to, during the session. They demonstrate an understanding of good manners as they politely ask their friends to play. Staff act as positive role models with regard to manners and children respond well to staff requests, for example, to sit quietly during story time.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are informed of the short term planning relating to their children's nursery education. They are given information on the Foundation Stage and how activities that are offered to the children are linked to the six areas of learning. Parents have a formal meeting to talk about their child's progress and set their next learning targets. They are welcome to come into the pre-school at any time to talk to their child's key worker or look at their child's progress files. They are kept well informed about pre-school practice through information displayed, including the setting's policies and procedures, through regular newsletters and through daily verbal exchanges. They are encouraged to become involved in their child's pre-school life by, for example, visiting the setting to talk to children about their home cultures or to support children by sharing books with them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation is good. Staff are well organised and provide a stimulating, caring environment for children's care, learning and play. Sessions run smoothly and provide children with good daily opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills within a positive learning environment where all children are treated with equal concern. Children relax and play happily and industriously during sessions. Procedures are in place to ensure the continuing suitability of staff to work with children. Documentation is in place and is regularly reviewed and securely maintained.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and work well as a team. The staff are led well by supportive management who are committed to the on-going development of all staff. The observations, assessments and teaching methods are continually monitored and evaluated by the management. Staff also evaluate on a weekly basis the activities that they have prepared. Staff appraisals are completed annually and training needs are identified at this time. The manager has attended training for the new Early Years Foundation Stage and will ensure all staff have an opportunity to complete

this training. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous care inspection the pre-school have improved their documentation. The complaints procedure and child protection policy have been updated and relevant contact numbers have been included. The child protection policy does include the procedure to follow should allegations be made against a member of staff or volunteer. The setting was also required to notify Ofsted of any changes, in any persons working on the premises and management committee members and ensure all submit to vetting procedure including Criminal Record Bureau checks at the earliest opportunity. The group now have secure systems in place for vetting all individuals who work with the children, and also are aware of procedures to notify Ofsted of any changes.

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):

- continue updating policies in line with the national standards for complaints

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):

- Consider ways of recording children's progress to plan the next steps for their development through play
- enhance planning by showing how activities will be differentiated to meet the individual needs of children

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