

St Gabriel's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113717
Inspection date	07 December 2007
Inspector	Christine Clint
Setting Address	St Gabriel's Hall, East Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9QH
Telephone number	01403 784828
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Registered person	St Gabriel's 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 satisfactory. 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 Gabriel's Playgroup has been registered since 1999. It is a committee run playgroup and is situated in the church hall of St Gabriel's church in Billingshurst, West Sussex.

The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:15 - 12:00 noon during term time. In the spring term afternoon sessions are available from 13:15 - 16:00 on a Monday & Wednesday and in the summer term from 13:15 - 16:00 on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children on roll, of these 24 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide rural area. The playgroup is able to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are eight staff employed, six of the staff including the supervisor hold appropriate early years qualifications and all staff have certificates in first aid training. At the time of the inspection 18 children were present.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is efficiently maintained because the premises are clean and modern with ample light and ventilation. Staff follow regular routines to ensure that tables are clean before children have snacks or eat their packed lunches. Children are very independent in managing their own personal care and they learn about hygiene when they wash up their own plates and cups after snacks. They automatically go to wash their hands when they see that the snack table is ready. They have good pictorial displays in the cloakroom to remind them about hand washing.

Children have freedom to choose when to have their snacks and they are encouraged to sit down for as long as they need. They competently follow the daily routines for finding their names and pouring their own drinks. Children often help to prepare the fruit with staff assistance and always have healthy choices of fruit and vegetables. Children use the water dispenser and help themselves to water in plastic cups; this is conveniently situated at a low level for children to access at any time. Older children who stay to eat lunch respond well to the opportunities for socialising whilst eating, they all sit together at the end of the session and interact well, which prepares them for school. Children with allergies or special dietary needs are fully considered because clear records are in place and photographs are displayed, information is competently shared between staff.

Children's health is prioritised because all accidents are swiftly recorded and signed by parents at collection time. A first aid kit is immediately available and staff maintain their training in first aid. There are fully prepared procedures in place for administering medication and these include obtaining parents written permission and recording all details. Staff show that they are dedicated to meeting individual children's needs. All children attending have written permission in place for seeking emergency medical treatment.

Children have a wide range of outdoor play opportunities and freedom of movement during the session. They use the permanent play equipment and clamber and slide. They run freely and balance on the stepping stones of wood which are placed in a circle; they bounce on the small trampoline which staff monitor well. Children competently manage the long slope to the outside area and easily climb the grassy bank, they are keen to play in the fresh air every day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are consistently safe when they choose indoor or outdoor play because they are well supervised and the low fenced area which surrounds the hall is securely bolted. There is ample space within the hall and in the grounds and all areas are well utilised. Children have a wide selection of play resources at every playgroup session and these are very suitable and organised in advance; all equipment is packed away daily.

Children's safety is regularly considered because staff show vigilance and there are staff rotas for supervising outdoor play. There is always a high ratio of adults to children because parents volunteer and assist at every session. There are full procedures in place for uncollected or lost children and all visitors sign on arrival. Fire exits are clear and a fire procedure is displayed. Fire drills are regularly included every term and recorded in the register. There is clear evidence

displayed to show that risk assessments are carried out for outside play and included when any changes occur; for example, how staff manage the hall when using the partition. Children have local outings on foot and permission from parents is in place. Children are confident to move freely and they show a good awareness of managing themselves when going in and out. They know that they are secure and that this is expected behaviour.

Children's welfare is thoroughly maintained because the playgroup supervisor ensures that all new staff attend child protection training. Staff are well informed about their duty to respond to any concerns and they are sure of the procedures in place. Any injuries that children have on arrival are recorded and parents are aware of this routine, they are also provided with written information about the playgroup's responsibility to refer any concerns. A clear policy for safeguarding children is in place and this includes procedures to be followed if there are any allegations against staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children respond well when they are practising their nativity play, they follow each other and learn where to stand. They move confidently when they are dressed as shepherds and Kings and they sing together with staff. Some smaller children are unsettled about the rehearsal and the change to the normal routine. They are able to watch and staff explain gently to ensure that they understand what will happen when parents come to watch. During a normal play session, children mingle happily and choose activities throughout the morning, they show confidence and interact with each other. They make decisions about their activities and they are very used to the daily routines of gathering together during the morning, to listen and learn, managing their snack time and having the choice of indoor or outdoor play. Children are secure and relate to each other well, they have developed close relationships with staff.

All children attending have equal opportunities for play and their development is monitored. Staff ensure that younger children have continuous opportunities alongside their older peers, to increase their self esteem, to gently learn about right and wrong and develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

Nursery education.

Children are developing their personal and social skills, they show increasing independence in choosing and being involved in activities. They often increase their concentration skills alone, when completing puzzles or playing on the computer. Children initiate ideas and speak in a familiar group at snack time and during group activities. Children play together and laugh with each other, they demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviour and follow the nursery rules for finishing their play and for helping at tidying up time.

Children recognise their own names because these are displayed on their cloakroom pegs and laid out on the table for taking items home. They find their own names at snack time to indicate when they have had their snacks. They have special book days and can choose books to take home. Children show enthusiasm for stories and listen with interest; they are learning new words. They learn a different letter sound each week and sing songs to help them to remember. Children's records of development show that they have opportunities to make marks on paper and they are learning to form letters and write their names.

Children complete puzzles and count all the numbered puzzle pieces, they learn to count each other at registration time and they can understand when numbers are bigger or smaller. Older children are linking quantity with number symbols, they can recognise mathematic descriptions when playing games on the computer. Children talk about the size of the pieces of apple when they are preparing these at snack time. They learn about quantities when helping with cooking activities and children can identify and name some shapes.

Children happily play imaginary games with the Little Tykes house and people. They dress up as Father Christmas and giggle and laugh with each other. They act out their own role play games and pretend to be animals. Children describe the story of sleeping beauty, they show that they listen and retain stories well. Observational notes in children's development profiles show that they are learning how to mix colours when painting and they know that yellow and blue make green. They sing frequently and practise rhythm, they have previously played a piano and they have learned new songs for Christmas and know the words.

Children have many opportunities to broaden their knowledge of the weather and recognise and talk about birds and insects because they spend a large part of the morning playing outside. They notice and talk about the worms and they have fed the birds; they have handled the sand outside after a shower of rain and they have experimented with floating and sinking items. Children have free, daily access to the computer and take turns to play games. They have visited the fire station in the nearby town and practised using the hose. They physically helped to roll up the hose when this was finished. Children travelled on the train and created their own train afterwards. Children take part in regular role play to enable them to practise going to school and there are close links with visiting teachers and pictures of their new uniform to broaden their knowledge.

Children are very used to moving freely for most of the playgroup session because they make decisions about activities and spontaneously go outside to play. They use a 'run' for cars on the sloping bank outside and photographs show that children are inventive with the way they make the cars travel across the sloping walk way to the building. They climb and slide outside, they run and push dolls buggies and use wheeled toys. Children manage well with small tools for cutting the play dough. They learn to skilfully cut the bananas at snack time. They carry items and help with tidying away the play equipment.

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Staff are very well deployed at all times and share daily responsibilities for supervising and managing specific activities. They have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and a clear understanding of how children learn. Staff link into children's chosen activities during the session to encourage learning and extend concentration. They also share responsibility for planning children's play. Staff have regular meetings to decide on themes and topics and these are simply displayed for parents on the notice board, with relevant learning intentions for children. Staff have key worker roles and these include completing the development profiles for each key child. Daily observations are recorded and stored effectively to be transferred to children's profiles. Children are making consistent progress and this is reflected in most areas of learning although the areas for improvement are not included in the development profiles or used to inform the future plans for play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have a variety of experiences to encourage their understanding of equality and to broaden their knowledge. They have celebrated Diwali and Chinese New Year, they have enacted a French 'Kings day' with visitors from France. They have tasted different food from other countries and celebrated traditional English and Welsh festivals. Children can see the posters displayed and play with puzzles and dolls to reflect the diversity within society. They are frequently involved with local community projects and have close links with the church and the local school.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully supported from an early stage because there is a dedicated member of staff who has knowledge and experience. There are fully comprehensive plans in place to show staff how to encourage and include opportunities for progress. Staff are very aware of the level of progress that children are making and there is good liaison with parents. Children's needs are regularly evaluated and assistance from professional agencies is included to ensure that staff are enabling children.

Children behave very well. They have ample provision for play and ample choice throughout the session. They happily follow the routines of the morning and they are confident and settled with staff. The playgroup have a social development policy which fully explains how challenging behaviour will be managed and how parents will be involved. Children make decisions about play and when to have their snacks and this level of choice enables them to become content and satisfied with the routines of the morning. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children are settled in the provision because their parents are fully welcomed and involved in the organisation of the playgroup, they form the committee annually and volunteer to help regularly during the week day sessions. Parents have ample information about the setting and the Foundation Stage curriculum; there are clear displays in the entrance area and full details are included in the playgroup welcome packs. Parents are asked to provide specific details to enable staff to know their child's preferences and provide suitable snacks. There is a comprehensive complaints procedure in place and many policies are provided to ensure that parental needs are managed.

Parents have answered a thorough questionnaire and many comments were positive and supportive. Any concerns raised by parents have been responded to by the supervisor with a full written explanation. These concerns included children having choice about playing outside in poor weather, which the supervisor has fully explained and enabled parents to understand about children making their own choices. Parents know that their children's development is observed and recorded and they do have some access to the records in place, although these are not regularly available and parents do not have the opportunity to contribute to the profiles.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care and the daily management of the pre-school is planned and organised. The committee are strongly supportive and recruited from the parents to manage the pre-school. There are clear records in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and most details are available. Although the newly elected committee have not understood the regulatory responsibility to inform Ofsted of the change of registered providers. The supervisor and staff

show a dedicated and committed attitude to sharing responsibilities; they have developed sound continuity of provision.

There is a comprehensive operational plan in place which includes a thorough range of policies and procedures. Committee meetings are regular and the supervisor attends and represents all staff. There are staff meetings during term time and informal exchanges of information during the sessions. New staff follow a planned induction process and there are clear guidance details for students and parents. Staff are well qualified and work effectively together, they share all responsibilities to ensure that children are provided with care and education. The registration certificate is displayed and there are clear registers in place to show when staff and children are present. The visitors book is signed on entry, all visitors are checked and timed on the premises.

The leadership and management of the nursery education provision is good. The playgroup supervisor and staff are experienced and show total dedication to planning and providing a wide variety of play experiences to meet the needs of the children and to develop their knowledge and understanding. Staff regularly carry out peer observations during the session, they work together and reflective comments are noted to show how staff concerns about practice have been managed and how they have highlighted the need for ensuring that children have fun. Staff responsibility for their key children's learning is recorded in the development profiles and these are completed, although they do not fully link with parents or encourage parents to contribute and share children's achievements from home. There is a proactive attitude towards ensuring progress for the playgroup and a commitment to evaluating the quality of the provision. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to provide the name and contact details of Ofsted in the complaints procedure. This is now included and information is displayed to enable parents to understand Ofsted's regulatory role. The provider was also asked to review and update the documentation used when giving medication to children. All records and procedures are clearly in place for administering medication to ensure that children's health is well managed.

At the last education inspection the provider was required to include plans for the soft play area which will further enhance children's physical development. An action plan is in place to show how the outside area has been developed to encourage children's regular physical development and to enable them to choose between indoor and outdoor play throughout the session.

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 satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that Ofsted are notified of significant changes
- ensure that any adults responsible for providing care complete all clearances promptly

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):

- develop systems to enable parents to regularly contribute and view their children's development profiles
- include targets for children in their development profiles and use these to inform future planning.

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