

Christchurch Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115343
Inspection date	07 November 2007
Inspector	Sarah Morfett
Setting Address	Christchurch Church Hall, Woodside Crescent, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 7JJ
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Registered person	The Management Committee of Christchurch P.C.C.
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?

Christchurch Playgroup was opened in 1977 and operates from a main hall, with access to a smaller room for small group activities, in Christchurch Church Hall. It is situated in Sidcup Kent, in the London borough of Bexley. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 27 children aged from 2 years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. The Playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The Playgroup employs 5 members of staff. All of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a hygienic environment because good cleaning routines are followed. For example, staff wipe surfaces with anti-bacterial sprays, check toilets regularly and sweep floors at the end of each session. An effective sickness policy ensures that when children are unwell they are sent home and parents are provided with guidelines about exclusion periods. Children learn that regularly washing their hands helps to get rid of germs and keeps them well. Therefore, by following these procedures children learn to be healthy and the risk of cross infection is reduced.

Good systems are in place for the recording of accidents and medication. For example, sufficient details are recorded and confidentiality is maintained when asking parents to sign for either procedure. Staff undertake training when children are on on-going medication that they need to administer. Parents give written permission to administer medication, take children on outings and for emergency medical advice and treatment. Therefore, children's health and well-being are fully promoted.

Children have ample opportunities to be active. They are offered a good balance of physical activities each session within the main hall. For example, they can pedal round on bikes and tricycles, spin hoops and throw soft balls. They take part in climbing and balancing activities which challenge their large motor skills. Children use a good range of tools and equipment which supports their small motor control. Therefore, their physical development is being promoted.

Children learn to make healthy choices about what they eat. For example, each day at the snack bar they can choose from cereal and fruit. They pour their own drinks of water, fruit juice or milk. Children can help themselves to a drink throughout the session as a jug of water is always available. Therefore, they begin to learn the benefits of a healthy diet.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment. They benefit from lots of natural light and the hall is set out with bright and inviting toys to create a child friendly environment for them to play in. The premises are well maintained and toys and resources are in good condition. They are cleaned regularly and children join in with the routines, washing toys in the water play. Therefore, they learn to respect what they are playing with.

Daily risk assessments ensure that children's safety is promoted. For example, staff ensure that the toilets are clean, fire exits are clear, the telephone is working and socket covers are in place. Children take part in regular fire drills; they are familiar with the routine and can be heard developing this safety knowledge within their game, by talking about emergencies and what they should do when playing with mobile phones. Therefore, children learn how to keep themselves safe.

Children are well cared for during their time in the play group because there is a good policy in place to help protect them from harm and neglect. Staff understand their role in safeguarding children and follow clear procedures should they have concerns about them. The group are

committed towards training staff in current procedures. Therefore, children's well-being is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the pre-school. They become involved quickly as there is a wide range of activities set out invitingly for them to choose from. The broad range of activities covers all the areas of development and provides children with balance and challenge. For example, they can play with construction toys, malleable materials, role play, puzzles, books and freely accessible writing area. This means that they are learning through the good play opportunities offered.

Children develop good relationships with the staff. They interact well with them and look for reassurance should they need it. Staff play alongside them supporting them as they play. For example, they work together building with construction toys helping them to make recognisable shapes. There are strong routines in place. Children know when it is snack time choosing when they have their snack, when it's music time and when it's time to tidy up. Therefore, they feel secure within the familiar routines.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage which is supported by regular training opportunities. Teaching methods are consistent as the staff use open-ended questions such as, 'how' 'why' and 'what' while they play with the children. This makes them think and provides challenge. When they first start parents provide details of what the children can do. Staff observe them to gauge where they are at; therefore, they have a firm base to move them forward from. Observations are carried out and identify the next steps in learning. These are used to inform the planning. However, the observations are not sorted into any order. Therefore, there is no clear way to assess how children are making progress.

Children develop good independence. For example, they manage their own personal hygiene, pour their own drink at snack time and make choices about the food they eat. They develop good relationships as they interact well, either playing in the home corner, acting out familiar situations or working together making a track for the trains. They have plenty of opportunities to mark make using pens and pencils in a variety of activities and they are encouraged to write their names on their pictures. Staff recognise their marks when they are handing out the pictures which makes the children feel that they have really achieved something.

Children have a good range of equipment that promotes their understanding of maths such as, playing with matching and sorting activities. Staff introduce appropriate language as they play asking 'how many' and is it 'bigger or smaller'. Therefore, they begin to understand maths concepts. They have use of a laptop and a range of simple programmable toys, which helps them begin to understand technology. Activities are planned to offer opportunities to explore and investigate. For example, by planting in pots and using magnets finding out how they work. However, they have limited use of the outside play area to develop knowledge of the natural world around them. Children enjoy many creative activities during the session. They explore the textures of malleable materials, such as play dough, and express themselves through free painting. Regular music sessions help them to develop rhythm and build a good repertoire of songs. The playgroup plan and provide a good range of experiences and play opportunities which help to prepare the children for school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy coming to the playgroup and are treated as individuals. Details are recorded about the children which means that staff are able to meet their needs effectively. Toys and resources reflect positive images of diversity. For example, puzzles, play people, dressing up and dual language books to support the children who have English as an additional language. Taking part in festivals and celebrations from other cultures helps them gain a wider view of the world around them. The group are committed to helping children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They use a graduated approach to developing children and have close links with outside agencies to offer advice and support.

Children behave well. Frequent praise and encouragement builds their confidence and self esteem. Staff use appropriate strategies to deal with unwanted behaviour and set clear boundaries so children know what is expected of them. A good range of policies and procedures keep parents informed of the service that group provide. They enter into written agreements ensuring children are well protected. A clearly set out complaints procedure is in place and parents are provided with the contact details of Ofsted should they need them.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress as they chat to their key worker at the end of the session. They are provided with information of the Foundation stage detailing the six areas of learning and the learning intentions for children. Parents say their children are happy at the group and make good progress. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered through the range of activities provided for them, and through discussion with staff. Therefore, children learn about the world around them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled in the well-organised environment. Space is utilised well and children move around easily as they explore the activities which are set up imaginatively to invite and interest them. A good staff ratio and effective deployment ensures children are supported very well. There are procedures in place to ensure all adults who work with the children are suitable to do so. All staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications and most staff are first aid trained.

A good range of policies and procedures make up the groups operational plan. Policies on lost or uncollected children are particularly clear and ensure staff know what to do step by step should this situation arise. The registration certificate is displayed and children's attendance is recorded. However, arrival and departure times are not noted, which means the system is not fully secure. All required documentation is in place and maintained to a good standard. This underpins the smooth running of the pre-school, therefore, children's health, safety and well-being is promoted.

Leadership and management is good. This is a close knit team who are all involved in setting clear aims for the group. Staff meetings are held where they look at the planning and make suggestions about themes and activities to promote children's learning, ensuring there is a broad range of experiences for them. They discuss their progress and identify the next steps in learning during these meetings as well as monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum. Staffs personal development is discussed during staff meetings and they have ample

opportunities to access training. Therefore they keep their knowledge and understanding up-to-date. Overall, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care and nursery education inspection the group were left several recommendations and key issues to address. Since then they have provided children with resources to develop their writing skills and increased role play experiences which means that children are developing their imagination and are able to act out familiar situations. They have also reviewed the planning and now identify children's next steps in development and learning through regular observation. The range of policies and procedures has been reviewed and are consistent with current legislation. Therefore, all children needs are met and they all make good progress.

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):

- extend children's learning opportunities by making better use of the outdoor play area (Also applies to Nursery Education)
- ensure children's arrival and departure times are noted on the record of attendance

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 the records of assessments to ensure that they show clearly how children are making progress

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