



St Christopher's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101597
Inspection date	18 October 2005
Inspector	Hilary Elizabeth Tierney
Setting Address	St Christopher's Church Hall, Lincoln Avenue, Warden Hill,, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 3DD
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Registered person	St Christopher'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 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 Christopher's Playgroup is a community group that started up 31 years ago. They are managed by a voluntary committee of parents. They meet in St Christopher's Church Hall and have the use of 2 large rooms. All resources have to be taken out and put away at the end of the session. There is a grassed area with flower borders and a hard surface car park that can be used for outdoor play.

During school terms, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday sessions run for the

rising 4 year olds from 09.00 until 11.30. The rising 3 years olds have sessions on Monday and Friday afternoons from 13.00 until 15.00. There are currently 36 children on roll, with 27 in receipt of nursery education funding. There are no children with special educational needs and 2 children for whom English is an additional language attending.

There are a team of 4 staff who work with the children. They are supported by duty parents. The staff team are appropriately qualified for their roles within the group. Support is given to the group by the Local Authority and the Foundation Stage consultants.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming environment where they learn how to care about themselves and develop a sense of independence. Children have a good understanding about the need to wash their hands before snacks, cooking and after using the toilet. Staff give clear explanations to the children about why they need to wash their hands and to ensure they wash them thoroughly. Children are free to visit the toilets whenever they need to, with minimal help from the staff.

Children's health is protected within the group and there are clear procedures in place to deal with minor injuries. The necessity to exclude sick children is understood by all staff and emergency numbers for parents are easily available should a child become ill when at the group.

Snack time is spread through the session. Children are free to come and have their snack when they choose. This works well and staff encourage children to choose the colour of plate they want, pour their own drinks, select their own food from the good selection offered to them. A healthy selection of snacks are offered including grapes, apples, strawberries, bananas, breadsticks and soup. Staff are fully aware of children's individual dietary needs and work closely with parents to ensure the correct food is offered.

Children have good opportunities to explore and test physical control during indoor and outdoor play. When outside the staff encourage the children to use bikes, balls and care for plants and flowers in their area in the garden.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a well organised environment, where they are made to feel welcome by the staff. The halls are decorated with displays of the children's work. Resources are easily accessible for the children from the selection put out by the staff at the beginning of each session. Children have free choice to wander between the rooms safely and choose the activity they want to do.

Children's safety is important to staff and they supervise children very well most of the time. However, on one occasion an uncleared adult was observed with the children unsupervised. Children are safe as they wander around the rooms and the main door to the building is securely locked. Children can develop their independence when they need to visit the toilet and wash their hands alone. There are detailed procedures in place to keep the children safe both in the setting and when on outings.

Children are well protected. There is a designated person for child protection and she is fully aware of the correct procedures to follow. Staff also have good awareness and understanding about the correct child protection procedures to follow in the event of having a concern about a child in their care.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly when parents leave. They run into the group happily and confidently. They are greeted individually by the staff in a caring way. Children access toys and equipment immediately when they enter the room enabling them to feel secure. During circle time staff explain clearly what activities are on offer so children may freely choose from a balanced selection that the staff put out before the children arrive at the setting. Children like the freedom of being able to wander between rooms and this encourages them to develop their independence and make their own choices. Children interact well. They co-operate together as they cook, for example they share the pastry cutters and spoons for putting jam in the pastry cases.

Children have access to a wide and stimulating variety of activities provided for them by the staff. They have access to books, construction toys, paper and crayons, cooking, sand and water play daily. Children interact well together as they play, share and take turns with appropriate interaction from staff.

Children communicate effectively with staff and each other. Staff listen to what children say and respond with clear answers. Staff show warmth and care towards the children. They are patient and understanding as children develop new skills. For example when playing outside with balls a child tries to catch a ball from an adult, this is tried several times with plenty of encouragement and patience from the adult.

Nursery Education - The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children have good concentration and are eager to take part in all activities, even tidying up. Staff are enthusiastic and motivate the children to try the different activities during the session. The children listen well to stories and recount them well. They have a good access to a balanced range of resources that are well chosen by staff to support their development across all areas of learning. Children make marks readily both freely and when encouraged by staff.

Children work well together, for example when they help to tidy up. They roll the carpets up and carry them together with little help from the staff. Children gain confidence in developing skills with small tools such as rolling pins and spoons during cooking. Mathematical language is promoted well with staff using words such as big,

little, medium and large. Staff encourage the children to understand rhythms, they use tapping sticks during songs. Staff use good open-ended questions to discuss what they are doing. For example they ask children about what they need to make jam tarts and how many they think they will make with the pastry they have.

Staff are very aware of children's needs and interests. They are getting to know the children well and although planning for activities is detailed, observation and monitoring of children's progress to plan for their next stages of development needs developing.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Resources are used well to promote children's understanding about diversity within the community. Children have good opportunities to learn about the world they live in with outings to the local parks. Staff have a good understanding about children's special needs and support them well.

Children are beginning to learn the boundaries of the group with clear explanations given by staff as they play. Their behaviour is good and there is natural use of effective praise and encouragement by both staff and duty parents. The children co-operate well together and help each other with problems as they play. For example they help each other with aprons for water play and cooking. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Through discussion with parents it is evident they are happy with the changes that the new play leader and her deputy have made and activities provided. Parents receive regular daily verbal feedback on how their child has been that day. Regular newsletters are produced for parents that include relevant information on activities and forthcoming events. A notice board also clearly displays relevant information on the weeks activities. Parents understand the complaints procedures and feel able to talk to the relevant person should they have any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the effective quality of organisation. Leadership and management are good. The staff plan the layout well to maximise the children's learning and development of their independence. All documentation is in place, the registration certificate is displayed appropriately.

Children benefit from the qualified, skilled staff. The new play leader and deputy have worked hard to ensure the take over was smooth. Changes have been made to good effect and the staff work well as a team, with regular staff meetings and they are supported well by the committee. There are effective appraisal systems in place that ensure the groups policies and procedures are consistently being applied and

updated. Although the staff have in place effective activity plans, these do need developing to ensure staff can monitor children's progress and plan for their next steps of development. All staff are committed to improvement and continual development.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were several recommendations from the last inspection. These were to: develop staffs' knowledge and understanding of the behaviour management policy, and ensure this is consistently applied by staff; ensure children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routines and suitable practices are in place regarding hand washing; keep a written record of medication given to children; and make sure there is regard to the Code of Practice for Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs in order that children with special needs may be supported well.

These have been successfully completed. The change in leader has resulted in a good understanding of the behaviour management policy and all staff are now consistent with the children. Good hygiene practices are taught to children and they are encouraged to wash hands before snacks, cooking and after using the toilet. Appropriate medication forms are in place in the event of having to give a child any medication. There is a detailed Special Educational Needs policy in place and the new deputy has taken the role of Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 uncleared adults are supervised at all times

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 develop planning and activities to enable children to build on what they know in a systematic way.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk