

St Demetrios Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	135385
Inspection date	07 December 2007
Inspector	Carolyn Mary Hasler
Setting Address	St Demetrios Church, Town Road/Logan Road, London, N9 0LP
Telephone number	020 8803 4411
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Registered person	Tamil Relief Centre
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Demetrios Playgroup was registered in December 1997, it is run by the St Demetrios Church Committee. They operate in a large hall at ground level, attached to St Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church. It is located within close proximity to schools, transport facilities and shops. The playgroup serves a multi-cultural community. The premises consist of one large hall, kitchen, toilets and wash facilities. There is a paved outdoor area. The playgroup operates both morning and some afternoon sessions, Mondays to Fridays, term time only, between the hours of 9.30 to 12 noon and Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12.30 to 3.00 pm. The setting is registered for 24 children and there are currently 38 children on roll who attend either the morning or the afternoon session. Currently 24 of the children aged between three and four receive funding for nursery education. Staffing structure consists of a supervisor and two assistants. The Playgroup operates a volunteer rota. All staff hold childcare qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning to live healthy lifestyles and are active throughout each session, moving around a spacious play area. They are learning how to be independent and this is encouraged when using the bathroom areas. Children are able to take care of their own personal needs and are learning how to wash their hands after using the toilets. Staff are around to remind them and offer assistance. An additional bowl of water is available to the children for washing hands after becoming involved in messy activities, although the water is changed regularly, there is no soap available and children dry their hands on a shared towel. This means that children are vulnerable to cross infection. Children independently help themselves to tissues and dispose of these appropriately, they are taught to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing.

Children can access first aid in an emergency, because all staff undergo first aid training and the first aid kit is kept close at hand. When children become sick on the premises the provider ensures their comfort while implementing their sick children's procedure. An emergency procedure is in place which ensures that parents are kept fully informed and medical intervention is sought when appropriate. The setting keeps records in line with regulations which underpin the setting service.

Throughout each session children can access fresh drinking water which they can pour for themselves. Generally children are offered a healthy snack of fruit, however a healthy option is not consistent. The setting ensures information on children's individual dietary requirements is recorded and acknowledged when providing snacks for children.

Children have opportunities to develop large and small muscle skills. Although they do not have access to an outside area, each day staff provide them with a variety of different activities which are designed to encourage them to physically exert themselves. For example, children have opportunities to play with large apparatus such as slides and rockers, planned activities such as jumping from one hoop to another and playing with bats and balls help them to build skills in co-ordination. They have planned dance and movement sessions which helps them understand how their bodies respond to exertion. Children are learning about the parts of their bodies and enjoy finger rhymes and games which help them to focus. Their hand eye co-ordination and fine motor skills is promoted by having access to tools such as writing materials, scissors, hole punches and rulers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel welcomed by staff who are warm and friendly and who greet them upon arrival. A large and spacious church hall offers them space to move around freely and comfortably without infringing on others. A stage area is utilised well to offer them additional space. Windows offer children access to natural light which is enhanced by overhead lighting, the temperature is comfortable and conducive to playing and learning. Children are accompanied to the bathroom which is a distance away from the hall where they have appropriate facilities such as toilets and sinks. Attached to the hall is a storage area and kitchen. The setting does not have an outside play area available but makes good use of the large hall offering children an area where they can move around more freely. They have access to toys, equipment and furniture, which are

child size, age appropriate, of good quality and well maintained. Toys and play equipment is varied and the setting makes use of local facilities such as lending schemes from the library.

Children are generally learning about staying safe. Staff remind children to be careful of others. For example, running around the hall may cause accidents and hurt someone unintentionally. Staff are able to demonstrate how they evacuate the premises in the event of an emergency and children have been practising this. Although the provider risk assesses the premises once a term, this is not sufficient and hazards which have been identified have not been actioned. For example, plug sockets remain uncovered, the floor is in disrepair and in some places could cause a tripping hazard. Fire exits are clearly displayed with running man signs, however fire safety precautions have not been maintained. Fire extinguishers have not been checked in several years and the fire evacuation instructions have not been clearly displayed on the walls. This means, students, new staff and parent helpers and visitors are vulnerable to injury and cannot efficiently help supervise children off the premises. Consequently children have not been sufficiently safeguarded.

Children are protected from abuse because all members of staff have been on child protection courses. They demonstrate a confident understanding of the issues involved in protecting children, understanding the different categories of abuse and recognising signs and symptoms. The setting ensures that all the correct steps are taken to record, respond and notify the appropriate professional bodies, they understand when it is appropriate to discuss their concerns with parents and when this places children in danger. The provider ensures that a comprehensive policy and procedure is in place and has copies of their local authority's guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are building confidence and self esteem, they have a variety of play opportunities set out around the room and are independent in their choices, moving from one activity to another as they select and explore. Children are building friendships and have the option of choosing to play in small groups, or independently. At planned stages of the session children all sit together for circle time and snack time, which offers them opportunities to build social skills on a larger scale. Familiar routines help children to work out what is coming next and this helps them feel comfortable. All children have opportunities to explore and engage in activities which are colourful and interesting. A large group of the younger children speak English as an additional language. They are learning to take part in large group activities and staff ensure that each child is given individual attention, drawing them into trying new activities and exploring their environment. Listening skills are encouraged through stories and group activities and staff focus in on children's individual interests. Picture labels, for example hand washing, in such places as the toilets help younger children learn to be self reliant.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning for children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a confident understanding of the Foundation Stage, children's individual development and how this influences planning under the six areas of learning. However, not all strategies for children's learning have been put in place and this currently compromises children's learning. Staff take account of parents in-depth knowledge of their children and make observations on initial contact in order to establish a starting point. Although they have a key worker system it is not fully functional, staff establish special relationships with each of their key children, they monitor their progress along the six areas of learning and the stepping

stones. Information from observations helps to inform planning and staff choose a focus group of children who they think will particularly benefit from planned activities. Staff work to a set of objectives and evaluate each of the activities and how children have responded. However, not enough emphasis is placed on the children's feedback, opportunities to share are sometimes lost because staff are not sufficiently skilled in prompting child led discussions.

Children show good attitudes to learning, they are interested in the activities available. Most children have sustained periods of concentration particularly with activities which interest them. Their social skills help them manage their own behaviour. Trusting relationships with staff help them by engaging them in play and learning.

Children are building listening skills enjoying activities such as story and circle time where they conform to the group and listen for sustained periods of time. They are able to talk about themselves confidently, offering information, their conversational skills are well developed and they are able to listen and respond appropriately. Although, their skills in developing language for thinking is not sufficiently promoted through open ended questions. Children who speak English as an additional language enjoy interactive games such as the washing line game, where they take turns to name objects and numbers and hang them on the line. They are linking sounds to letters, labels all around their environment tell them where they can find particular activities. Children are learning that written word can be used for all sorts of reasons, they have a post office where they can play with forms and leaflets and write pretend letters. Mostly they recognise their own names written down, they have been learning their phonics and children can identify key letters to their own names. They make good use of the book corner enjoying picture books, turning the pages from right to left. Some children use their name card to copy their names at the head of their work while others are forming letters and can write their own names. Activities such as forming letters in the sand and in cornflower and having access to writing materials help children build confidence in writing skills.

Children are counting as a group confidently and most children count confidently to 10 and beyond associating numbers to objects, they recognise numbers in numerical form. They are learning the importance of different numbers, for example units and tens and are using numbers and mathematical language in every day situations. For example, celebrating birthdays and acknowledging ages. They are learning simple addition and subtraction through finding pairs of socks, adding one more and taking one away. Children have free access to tools such as rulers to measure and calculators. They are learning how to problem solve through activities such as puzzles and construction.

Children are exploring different materials such as sand both dry and wet, water and dough, different size containers, cutting tools and strainers offer children opportunities to investigate how these materials can be manipulated. They are learning about volume, shape and size; and how materials work when mixed with others. They have been watching ice and what happens when it is left in a warm area over time. Children enjoy completing challenging puzzles and creating models from construction materials. They are learning how pieces fit together to build complicated constructions. Old phones, working computers, programmable toys and calculators offer children opportunities to become familiar with technology.

Children's creativity is generally promoted. Free access to musical instruments helps children's co-ordination, listening skills and allows them to explore sound and rhythm without feeling inhibited. They enjoy playing familiar roles in the home corner and post office areas, exploring dressing up and experiencing language, thoughts and feelings both for themselves and of others. Children are exploring small world equipment, they enjoy playing with cars and trucks

and using sounds and language associated with the activity as they explore and investigate their imaginations. Art and craft activities are available and offer children opportunities to use different materials such as crayons, pencils, glue, glitter and other materials. Access to free painting is not always available and art and craft activities are overly directed limiting children's creative development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are learning about changes in the seasons, the weather and the days of the week. This helps them grasp an understanding of the world around them and build concepts such as time. The setting encourages children to feel part of the church through visits at important times of the church's calendar. Birthday celebrations help them to feel special, and part of their community. Role play and building friendships helps them to care for others. They are learning about their own and others' cultures, religions and lifestyles. The setting caters for children from the diverse local community and their natural curiosity and ability to make friends which are sometimes extended to outside the setting helps children build a greater understanding of how other people live their lives. The nurturing environment of the setting, which is well resourced with play equipment, posters and books, helps to promote positive images of others who are different to themselves but also images of people who have lots of similarities. This helps children to explore and investigate their thoughts and feelings. Children have been learning about festivals both religious and cultural and how people celebrate them; through project work. As part of this ethos they have been learning about the Chinese New Year, Greek Easter and celebrate Christmas and Hanukkah through a variety of activities.

Although the setting does not currently care for any children with special needs or learning difficulties, a Special Needs Coordinator has been appointed and supports staff in their assessment, and subsequent work with children. The staff work closely with both parents and other professional bodies providing children with action plans which helps them progress along the stepping stones. There are a number of children for whom English is an additional language. Staff work hard to ensure these children have a positive experience of attending pre-school, this includes allowing children to use their home language and at the same time supporting their knowledge and understanding of English. The setting has policies and procedures in place which recognises the responsibility to meet the needs of all children, making all reasonable adjustments to care arrangements in order to help them meet their full potential and to ensure that no child is disadvantaged.

Children are learning about how to manage their own behaviour, they are learning important social skills such as how to conform to group situations, sharing and taking turns with popular pieces of equipment. They build trusting relationships with staff who offer children positive role models on how to behave. Staff are skilled in keeping children interested and engaged and they provide an appropriate environment to ensure children learn how to cooperate and respond positively. Children are learning to be kind to one another and to respond to each other with politeness. They receive positive messages of encouragement and this helps them feel valued and important. Strategies for supporting challenging behaviour include distraction and re-engaging children in play. They are age appropriate and take account of children's ability to understand and achieve. When behaviour is managed well children respond in a positive way.

Children benefit from secure relationships between the setting and their parents and carers. Both parents and staff work together to support children's first days. They ensure that children establish trusting relationships with staff in order for children to separate successfully and feel secure. On initial contact parents receive an information pack which contains information about the setting, it helps parents to prepare children for nursery life and establishes a greater understanding of how the setting works. A database of children's individual needs and emergency details is obtained to ensure that the setting has appropriate and detailed information on each child. Parents and staff share verbal information frequently, they also have a notice board which they can refer to for current information. Parents who speak additional languages are utilised to help translate letters for others who have limited English. The setting has a complaints procedure and a system for logging complaints. However, details of the regulating body are not made readily available to parents, should they wish to share their concerns more formally.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive Nursery Education is satisfactory. Parents lack information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and the six areas of learning in order to understand and monitor their child's progress effectively. Regular news letters inform parents of activities and projects that are current or in the near future. They are encouraged and some take up opportunities to become involved in their children's learning, through spending time at the setting as helpers and generally by supporting children in bringing in objects from home to support project work. Throughout the year staff record children's progress within their profile folders which contains a visual record of how well children are doing. At the end of the school year children receive a written report which covers how children are progressing across the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children feel secure because they are cared for by staff who are kind and caring, the team holds the appropriate level of childcare qualifications and have all undergone a robust recruitment procedure. Although the staff team are newly established, they work effectively together, supporting each other, however the roles between leadership and management and staff, sometimes lack distinction. The setting organises space and resources to meet children's needs appropriately, they generally encourage children to be healthy because they organise routines which help children understand and practise personal hygiene, eat well and exercise, although healthy choices are sometimes limited. Children are generally kept safe and are learning about how to keep safe. They do this because staff deployment and appropriate supervision is in place and children receive sufficient reminders. Children enjoy their time at the setting, they are motivated and challenged, achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. They are contributing to their own community and learning about the wider world.

Children's care is underpinned by clear documentation. The setting ensures that all records are stored securely and practitioners understand issues of privacy and confidentiality. They ensure that children's records are maintained once children have left care arrangements.

Leadership and Management of the setting is satisfactory. Children benefit when staff and their managers have time to plan and share information appropriate to individual children's learning programmes. The setting sets time aside each week to meet and share ideas, look at training needs and plan activities for children. However the current climate of change has left the leadership and management and staff feeling insecure and this impacts on the care and learning of children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was set actions, this included the development of their complaints procedure, displaying their registration certificate and devising and implementing a recruitment policy. The complaints procedure currently omits contactable information on the regulator. However in general parents are informed on how to make a complaint and records are kept in line with regulation. The registration certificate is now displayed in a prominent place, this allows parents and the general public to see that the conditions of registration are being met. The recruitment policy is now in place and ensures that only suitable persons are recruited to work with children.

In addition the person in charge agreed several recommendations which included. The development and review of the operational plan. This has now been met and helps to organise the setting providing children with routines and boundaries. This helps them feel secure.

They were asked to devise and implement a sick children's policy and permission from parents for emergency medical treatment. This is now in place and safeguards children's health.

They were asked to maintain an accurate register of both children and staff. This is now in place and ensures that staff are aware of who ever is on the premises at any given time, helping to safeguard children.

They were asked to make drinking water available at all times. This is now in place and prevents children from becoming dehydrated.

They were asked to operate a key worker system. This is partly in place. Staff have organised groups of children to monitor and evaluate so that this information can be used to inform planning. This helps children feel special to someone, build trusting relationships and helps them make progress through the stepping stones.

They were asked to provide more opportunities for children to talk. This is now in place. Children are feeling more confident in their ability to communicate with others.

Lastly they were asked to use observations to plan the next step in children's play, learning and development. This is now in place and children are making sufficient 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.

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 satisfactory.

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):

- improve hygiene routines at hand washing times and ensure children are offered healthy choices at snack times
- ensure the premises are risk assessed frequently both by the setting and the fire safety officer and any hazards identified are acted upon promptly
- insure that liability insurance is in place
- review information made available to parents to include both information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and contact details of the regulatory body (complaints procedure)

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 skills in prompting child led discussions and provide opportunities for children to express their own creative ideas

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