

St Michaels Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	109883
Inspection date	09/10/2008
Inspector	Penny Wood
Setting address	Church Hall, Colebrook Way, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3BB
Telephone number	07940 569651
Email	
Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

St Michaels Playgroup opened in 1975. It is a community group and operates from a playroom attached to St Michaels Church in Andover, Hampshire. Children enjoy access to a secure outdoor play area. The premises are accessible to those with disabilities. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The setting is open five days a week from 09:00 to 11:45 and from 12:15 to 15:00 during term time only. A maximum of 26 children aged between two and five years old may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 46 children on roll. Of these, 32 children receive funding for early years education. The setting supports children who speak English as an additional language and children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The setting employs six members of staff, all of which have a suitable childcare qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children receive a warm welcome from staff on their arrival, which encourages most children to settle quickly into their play and activities. For those who require additional support, good systems are in place to ensure they receive reassurance from staff until a time when they have developed sufficient confidence to join in with activities.

Children benefit from an inclusive environment, which allows all children to access a good range of activities and play opportunities. Very good systems support children and their families for whom English is not their first language and the setting is particularly strong in supporting children with speech and language delays.

Recommendations raised at the last inspection have been suitably addressed and the setting has a clear focus on how they would like to improve the outside area in the future. Management recognise the importance of continual development of the setting's practice and provision.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- further develop systems to involve parents in children's learning
- further develop opportunities for children to make choices within their play and to develop independence in arts and crafts
- ensure the visitors book is consistently maintained

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children benefit from the setting's ability to evaluate its own provision. For example, the committee and manager liaise regularly to discuss issues arising, such as changes to the policies, procedures and practice. Regular meetings between the manager and staff to discuss planning and practice issues ensure all staff are informed and play an active role within the provision. The setting receives support and guidance from the local authority and an early years centre in Andover, which enhances the provision and outcomes for children.

Robust recruitment and induction procedures ensure all staff are suitable to work with children and aware of their role and responsibilities. Children benefit from the high ratio of qualified staff, which work well as a team. Ongoing participation on short courses enables staff to develop their knowledge and practice.

Good systems ensure children's safety and wellbeing. Staff have a clear understanding of the setting's child protection policy and the action to take if concerned about a child's welfare. Visitors to the group are supervised by staff. However, they are not routinely requested to sign the visitors' book as a record of their attendance in the group. Regular risk assessment of the premises ensures hazards are minimised and children play free from the risk of harm.

On joining the group, parents receive in-depth information about the group within the prospectus, policies and procedures. During the year, they receive further general information, for example, through regular newsletters. Parents are invited to attend open events each term to discuss their child's progress and development. However, there is little information readily available, which informs parents of the activities provided and learning which takes place on a day-to-day basis. Children enjoy bringing items in from home to share with staff and their friends. However, the group do not provide parents with ideas or activities, which they can complete with their children at home. This restricts parent's involvement within their child's nursery education and limits the opportunity for parents to extend children's learning at home.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children willingly participate in a good range of activities, both in and outside. They show pleasure and enthusiasm and are developing good levels of confidence within their abilities. Where appropriate, staff ensure quieter and less confident children receive support and reassurance until they are ready to participate.

Staff provide children with a good range of planned activities, ensuring they make progress across all areas of learning. Children enjoy some opportunity to self-select toys from the storage units, although limited free space restricts the extent to which they are able to follow their own interests within the classroom.

When providing activities, staff use the effective planning system to inform them of the intended learning for the activity. Staff adapt activities where appropriate to ensure children experience varying levels of challenge according to their individual abilities. However, at times, art and craft activities are too prescribed by staff, which restricts children's independence and creativity.

Observations on children during play and activities are recorded within individual development records and used to inform children's progress. Staff use children's records and knowledge of their stages of development to inform future planning in order to encourage children to make good progress within their learning.

Children are developing their language skills through discussions with each other and staff. They enjoy sharing their experiences, such as talking about the cobwebs they saw on the way to playgroup. For those children with speech and language delays, excellent strategies, such as small group activities that target specific issues, promote children's language development.

Children enjoy daily opportunities to be physically active in either the garden or main hall during inclement weather, promoting their good health. Children are able to see to their own needs, such as going to the toilet and helping themselves to water when thirsty. They follow clear hygiene routines, such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet, with staff talking to children about cleaning their hands to remove the germs.

Good strategies maintain children's attention during large group activities, such as using intonation of voice. Children behave well because the staff adopt age appropriate and understandable strategies to manage behaviour. Throughout the day, children are encouraged to use their manners, saying 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	Good
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	Good
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	Good

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	Good
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	Good
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	Satisfactory
How well are children safeguarded?	Good

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	Good
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	Good
How well are children helped to stay safe?	Good
How well are children helped to be healthy?	Good
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	Good
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	Good
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	Good

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There has been one complaint made to Ofsted since the last inspection. A concern was raised regarding safety in that a child was able to leave the outside play area unaided. The provider carried out an internal investigation and reported their findings to Ofsted. We were satisfied with the action taken and the provider remained suitable for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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.