

St Mark's Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	301174
Inspection date	01/10/2008
Inspector	Karen Marie Tervit / Eileen Grimes
Setting address	St Marks Church Hall, North Road, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL1 3BH
Telephone number	07768 400316
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).

Description of the setting

St Mark's Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1985. It is a committee run setting operating from a church hall, which includes two play rooms, a kitchen, toilet facilities and outdoor play area. It is located to the North of Darlington. The building is on one level and has easy access. The pre-school serves the local area.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register for a maximum of 26 children at any one time. There are currently 35 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 9.00 - 11.30 and 12.45 - 15.15.

There are six staff, one full time and five part time working with the children. All staff hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment. Staff set out and clear away all resources on a daily basis, working exceptionally hard to create a stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment for all children. There is a broad range of activities available freely to the children; they confidently select their chosen activities which cover all areas of learning and development effectively, enabling them to make good progress. Extremely effective links with parents and carers help to involve them in their children's care and education. However, the links with other providers are limited. All staff are very clearly involved and proactive in evaluating their already good practice, identifying their strengths and areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop the resources which reflect diversity
- further develop the links with between other providers to enhance children's learning.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The manager and her staff team have a very good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are committed to the care and education of the children. The setting benefits from robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure that children are safeguarded well. Highly comprehensive policies and

procedures, which support children's welfare, are in place and updated and reviewed regularly. All documentation, including written risk assessments, required to promote the safe and efficient management of the setting are in place and securely stored to promote confidentiality. The manager shows a commitment to the professional development of her team, encouraging training in all areas. Regular team meetings and individual appraisals play an integral part in the continual self-assessment of the setting. Recent developments include the transformation of the outdoor environment into an exciting learning area. Good progress has been made in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection. For example, assessment records clearly identify the next steps in children's learning and snack time is an extremely sociable occasion.

Good emphasis is put on partnership with parents, this significantly enhances children's overall well-being. Children are able to settle according to individual need and parent's wishes. Staff are extremely proactive in involving parents and other family members in their children's learning. For example, parents have helped children celebrate different festivals and have helped with developments in the outdoor area. Very good procedures ensure that parents are kept informed about their child's development, including regularly accessing their children's individual digital learning journey and having one to one meetings with their children's key person. This is complemented by interesting newsletters which provide a wealth of useful information for parents about their children's learning, along with their own individual daily diaries. Parents also contribute by letting the staff know what children have been doing at home, allowing staff to follow this through in the pre-school.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff understand the learning and development requirements well and provide a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Children settle well and enjoy their time at the pre-school. They are able to bring their comforters or stay with their siblings if they wish. They are motivated to learn and eagerly engage in a wide range of stimulating activities that enhance their development and learning skills. Staff are confident in their approach, they plan a varied and interesting range of activities for all children across the areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. Staff observe children well and use their good knowledge of children's individual interests to plan for the next steps in their learning. They encourage a high level of independence. Children thoroughly enjoy self registration and develop good skills from preparing their own snacks. Children's thoughts and ideas are extended, through skilful questioning and gentle support from adults. They can select their own toys and activities and move around independently between the two rooms. The resources which reflect diversity are limited. Children are well behaved and develop good relationships with staff and each other. Staff are good role models and give children praise and encouragement for their achievements. This contributes to the children's sense of trust and develops their positive attitude to learning.

A comprehensive range of risk assessments are in place, these are regularly reviewed and managed well to provide a safe and secure environment for children.

An emergency evacuation procedure is in place, regularly practised and a record maintained, which raises children's awareness of fire safety. Children's health is very well promoted with clear procedures in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, children adopt healthy hygiene practices, such as, washing hands before snacks and after toileting. They learn about healthy eating and make healthy choices, for example, they select their own fruit and vegetables at snack times. All children have access to fresh drinking water. Children learn the necessary skills to keep themselves safe. For example, they know how to handle the knives when spreading the butter on their sandwiches.

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?	Good
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 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 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.