

St Michael's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 224970
Inspection date 02/03/2009
Inspector Rachel Wyatt

Setting address The Parish Centre, Upper Street, Tettenhall,
Wolverhampton, WV6 8QF

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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 Michael's Playgroup opened in 1966. It is managed by a committee and operates from a room in the Parish Centre in the Tettenhall area of Wolverhampton. The group serves the local area. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. There is level access to the premises with a step down to the outside play area. The playgroup is open from Monday to Thursday during school term times. Sessions are from 09.30 until 12.00.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 20 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 27 children aged from two to under five years on roll.

Five part-time staff work with the children. Three members of staff have Level 3 early years qualifications and one member of staff is working towards a Level 2 qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority. Children regularly visit the library in the building.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Children are happy and settled, enjoying the calm, nurturing support of kind and caring staff. Children's welfare, learning and development needs are understood by staff who have a good relationship with parents and carers, ensuring everyone feels welcomed and included. There are some weaknesses in record keeping and management systems but the supervisor and staff in particular are dedicated to the on-going development of the setting. This is reflected, for example, in the way they follow up good practice ideas from training and have successfully addressed all recommendations agreed at the last inspection.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop children's creativity and imagination by improving the layout and management of role play and small world play areas
- improve the use of observations and assessments to identify children's learning priorities and to plan relevant learning experiences for each child
- improve the accuracy of the daily record of staff working with the children.

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure that Ofsted is notified of any changes to the individuals who are members of the governing body (the committee) within 14 days of the event occurring (Suitable people).

16/03/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are looked after by a caring, dedicated supervisor and staff. They work well together, understanding their roles to promote children's welfare, learning and development and to this end, readily attend training in order to develop their understanding and good practice. For example, following a behaviour management course they have adapted the room layout in order to improve children's access to activities and to aid their concentration. Staff have also focussed on implementing the key person system and adopted revised assessment and planning systems which are increasingly helping them to plan appropriate activities, although there are some inconsistencies in tracking individual children's learning priorities.

A strong partnership with parents is developed from the outset. New families are warmly welcomed and staff ensure that children settle and that their parents are reassured. Staff take time to explain the purpose of required documentation, to seek parents' views about their child's abilities, interests and routines, and to give them feedback at the end of their child's first day. Parents are encouraged to read the group's policies and procedures and some of them serve on the management committee. Parents and staff regularly exchange information about children, forthcoming activities and the ways families can contribute to their children's learning at home or in the setting.

Children are broadly safeguarded as adults working with them understand their responsibility to protect them from harm. They monitor and record changes or incidents which affect children's behaviour and well-being, and know what to do if they have concerns about a child. However, children's welfare has been potentially compromised by the group not promptly notifying Ofsted of new committee members or ensuring their completion of required documentation. In other respects, the group's systems support children's welfare. Required details are obtained about each child and their family before they start, including who has parental responsibility, who may collect the child, and to ensure all necessary agreements are in place. Children's health and hygiene are also promoted. Their individual medical, dietary and care needs are understood. Children have prompt appropriate treatment if they become unwell, need medication or have an accident and their parents are kept well-informed. Children's comfort and personal hygiene are well-managed in order to minimise the risks of cross infection.

Children generally benefit from the group's monitoring and evaluation systems. For example, children are looked after in a safe and secure environment because risk assessments are robust and daily safety checks are carried out. The staff, through clear consistent staff development and training, show a commitment to improving their knowledge and enhancing the provision for children. Adults working with children have also evaluated all aspects of the provision and begun to address areas identified for improvement. However, although documentation is generally well-organised, omissions to attendance records have not been picked up so these do not always accurately reflect who has been working with children at each session.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children enjoy being at playgroup. They are keen to join in the varied activities provided by the staff. The learning environment is generally inviting and children can make their own choices from a range of toys and equipment. Children independently use a cosy book corner and popular mark making table. They enthusiastically join in story times in the adjacent library and express themselves creatively during art and craft activities. However, there are times when children's interest is not sustained because, for example, the layout of small world and role-play areas is not always stimulating and these areas become untidy.

Children benefit from the staff's warm rapport and interest in what they are doing. The adults ensure learning is fun and relaxed, whilst at the same time challenging children's thinking through their adept questioning and explanations. Children are active learners. For example, their understanding of shape, size, colour and number is fostered in practical ways as they race toy cars across the room, or when they listen to and then act out the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', following this up by making porridge.

Children's progress is supported by increasingly effective assessment procedures. Staff know children well from their initial observations, interactions and discussions with parents, which in particular, help them to identify each child's starting points when they first attend the group. An appropriate assessment and planning system has been implemented but it is not always clear what children's learning priorities are or how the planned activities will move them onto the next stage. However, in their practice, adults confidently adapt their approaches and resources to cater for children's varying levels of understanding and skill. For example, children comfortably use information technology to support their learning as the setting has a good mix of programmable toys as well as a computer.

Children's life skills are promoted. They have good relationships, play well together, share and take turns. They like to help, for example, assisting with tidying up. They feel confident and valued as staff encourage them and recognise their efforts and achievements. Children develop positive attitudes about diversity through taking part in meaningful activities focussing on the lives and beliefs of others. Children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle is fostered during regular outside play, good hygiene routines and from taking part in activities focussing on healthy eating. They also understand about the importance of behaving in ways that are safe for themselves and others, including practising well-organised fire evacuations.

Parents' contributions to their children's learning are valued. For example, they provide items to use in the setting, help with activities such as setting up the computer, and follow up activities with their children at home.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is 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?	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	3
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	3
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3

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.