

# St Matthews Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

101674

**Inspection date**

26/03/2009

**Inspector**

Linda Janet Witts

**Setting address**

Church Hall, Church Road,Cainscross,Stroud, Glos, GL5 4LH

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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 Matthews Playgroup operates from St Matthews Church hall, which is to the west of Stroud town centre and close to St Matthews Primary School. The group is managed by a committee of parents. The group uses the main hall, entrance hall, kitchen and toilets. They do not have a designated outside area, but a garden patch is available for planting and a hard surface area can also be used at times. Victory Park playing fields and play park are close by and regularly used by the group. The church hall has disabled access and toilet facilities. All play areas are on ground floor level.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and may provide care for 26 children in the early years age group from two years, at any one time. There are currently 49 children on roll, of whom 36 are in receipt of government funding. The group operates all-year-round, Monday to Friday, term-time only.

Playgroup sessions run on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 09.00 until 12.00, and Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons from 12.30 until 15.30. Sessions for rising three year-olds are offered on Monday and Thursday mornings from 09.00 until 12.00. The group welcomes children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

A team of five staff are employed, of these, one person has a level 2 qualification and three have level 3 qualifications. One person is also working towards a level 5 qualification. Parents assist staff by doing regular playgroup duties. The group also receives teacher support from the local authority.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Children enjoy their time at the setting and overall make progress in their learning and development. All children are warmly welcomed into the group and the relationships between staff and children are very good. Planning for individual learning does not always work effectively to support the older boys attending. A strong partnership with parents is established and this contributes significantly to the well-being of the children. The group is committed to ongoing improvement; action is taken in response to recommendations made at inspection and during visits from local support workers, and they respond to parent feedback gathered by way of regular questionnaires. However, they have not developed a system to evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of their provision.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- use the Ofsted self-evaluation form and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review

- help children to show care and concern for living things
- plan for each child's learning requirements and tailor the approach to particular learning styles, such as those shown by some of the boys attending
- make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interest and learning styles and use these to identify learning priorities

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

The leader and staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Together they have taken positive steps to improve the quality of their provision and to offer a broad range of activities for children of all ages and stages of development. The staff team is made up of enthusiastic, experienced individuals. There are four key members of staff, three of whom hold level 3 qualifications and the other is qualified to level 2. One of the four is also working towards a foundation degree in early years. An equally enthusiastic assistant supports the group when others are training. They work well together, helping to create a friendly atmosphere. Staff and parent helpers are clear about their day-to-day roles and responsibilities. They set out activities before children arrive and are deployed sufficiently well in order to support children's learning and development. The adults ensure that children are safe and well cared for. As a result children are settled and happy.

Staff use observation to identify activities children enjoy and ensure that activities planned cover each area of learning. However, they have not fully considered how to ensure that each child is helped to develop in each area of learning. Also, there is no effective system to ensure that observations are carried out systematically for each child. Targets are identified for future learning, although relevant, tend to focus upon children's personal and social development.

The partnership with parents is a key strength of the provision. Two-way communication is actively promoted and parents are encouraged to take an interest in their children's learning. Parents talk with staff when they deliver their children and also when they do a playgroup duty. A diary system is used to note significant achievements or requested information for parents, for example, how much children have eaten. Parents are encouraged to add comments about what children do at home on 'wow vouchers' that are added to children's progress records. Open afternoons are also held giving parents an opportunity to go through their children's records with their child's key group leader and together they agree future targets for children's learning.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are suitable and children are protected from those who are not vetted. The premises are secure, staff supervise children well and they help them to learn to keep themselves safe. Risk assessments have been completed for all areas used by children and also for outings. All key staff are trained in first aid, food hygiene and child protection and suitable procedures are implemented to safeguard children's welfare. Hygiene practice is good.

A system of ongoing internal review, to evaluate practice is not in place. Although

they have followed guidance received from outside professionals and acted in response to parent feedback they have not clearly identified strengths and weaknesses in their provision. Therefore, action for improvement does not always focus upon aspects that need it most.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children relate well to one another and staff. They chat together as they go about their play and are very well behaved. Children learn the behavioural expectations within the setting from an early age. The two, three and four-year-olds wait patiently as they sit on the carpeted area for registration and story time. Older children recall what each of the 'rules' are, pointing to the pictorial 'rules' displayed. Children receive meaningful praise and encouragement and wait with anticipation to see if they have been chosen as 'star of the day'. Even if children are not chosen they are quick to congratulate the child that is chosen. The 'star of the day' is then able to choose two activities to add to the range already set out.

Children are generally interested in their surroundings and move between activities with confidence. A variety of enjoyable activities are set out for children and they are able to choose what they do. The activities offered cover the six areas of learning quite successfully. There is little opportunity for children to access additional resources, unless they ask adults to get items from the storage cupboard.

Children learn to take turns at activities and to share resources. They mostly communicate confidentially with adults, including those unfamiliar to them. They recall personal experiences and make connections between their experiences and those of others. There are some times when staff do not effectively engage with children to challenge and extend their thinking. Children join in group counting and number rhymes. Three and four-year-olds can count small groups of objects and sort objects by colour, shape and size. A selection of books is available and children will often use books as part of their role play. For example, one child takes on the lead as 'teacher', and her 'class' sit to listen to stories and answer questions about the weather and activities. Children listen intently to stories read expressively by adults.

Children have occasional opportunities to learn about information and communication technology. For example, they use the playgroup laptop one at a time under close supervision of an adult. They use a paint program to create computer generated pictures, which they then print out to keep. As a group they go out for local walks to explore the local community and natural parkland nearby. They celebrate festivals and have even done a role-play wedding in the church, involving the priest and parents. Children dressed in relevant attire and enthusiastically participated in the pretend ceremony. Children have opportunities to get up close to living things, such as, a rabbit, tortoise and frogspawn. However, they are not always helped to learn to show care and concern for living things. For example, children are permitted to handle frogspawn, drizzling it between their fingers squeezing and prodding it. When a child expressed concern for the wellbeing of the frogspawn they were told that they could get more. This does not

help children to value life.

Children move with confidence around the church hall. They can slide, crawl through equipment, balance along low beams and learn to 'hoola' with hoops. Outside in the church yard they have space to do parachute games and other active group games. Visits to the local play park provide opportunities for children to climb, use rockers, a see-saw and swings, helping to develop their physical skills.

The children are very imaginative. In the absence of a designated home corner children utilise other available space and resources as props. When dolls, dolls pushchairs and 'doctors' props are provided children enthusiastically engage in role-play based on their own first-hand experiences. Boys are keen to engage in superhero play but this is often discouraged. A number of the boys are not motivated to engage in activities to promote their all-round learning. There are some activities that they avoid and others that they only visit briefly. Adults have not fully explored ways to address this.

Children are cared for in a suitably maintained environment. They learn to stay safe and hygiene routines promote good health well. Children routinely wash their hands before meals and after 'messy' play. They enjoy a variety of snacks and those attending afternoon sessions bring packed lunches, which helps with preparation for school. Children have free access to individual water bottles, labelled with their names and photographs to aid recognition. Children also have good opportunities to prepare and cook food such as, pizzas with their own choice of topping.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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?	2

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	3
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
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](http://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.