

St Johns Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY285690
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Inspector Shirley Ann Jackson

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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 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 John's Playgroup opened in 1974 and moved to new premises in April 2004. It is situated close to an industrial park on the outskirts of Cinderford. It operates from two rooms in a single storey building. There are stairs separating the two rooms used. There is an outdoor play area available as well as a large field for outdoor play. The group opens on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, during term times, from 09.30 until 13.30. The playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee of parents and serves the local area. The group may care for a maximum of 24 children aged from two the end of the early years age group.

There are currently 40 children on roll aged from two to four years. The group is in receipt of funding for the provision of free early years education. The setting can support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions. A team of five staff work directly with the children. Of these, four hold a recognised level 3 qualification in childcare. The group receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The needs of the children are routinely met as staff recognise the uniqueness of each child attending the setting. They offer activities and experiences which stimulate each child to ensure that all children make good progress in their learning and development. Adults interact and communicate effectively with the children to ensure that they are all supported. Staff promote children's welfare with success to ensure their safety and well-being. Partnerships with parents and carers are sound, however, links with other settings are in their infancy. Staff use self-evaluation effectively to help them to identify areas of strength and areas for development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- promote children's awareness of diversity, and help to make families feel welcome, by promoting a positive attitude to disability, ethnicity, cultural and social diversity
- analyse observations to help to plan next steps for individuals and groups of children and ensure these are clearly recorded in future plans for all staff to see
- ensure that parents have regular opportunities to be involved as part of the ongoing observation and assessment process

The leadership and management of the early years provision

All required records, policies and procedures are in place, are clear and are up to date to ensure that the needs of all children are met. The staff team are well qualified and work well together as a team. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities within the group helping to ensure it operates effectively. Procedures are in place for staff recruitment, however, the current staff team have all worked at the setting for some time, ensuring consistency and continuity. Regular staff appraisals help to identify staff's strengths and areas for development. This helps to promote staff's professional development as well as what the setting is able to offer to the children. The setting is well organised and offers children a good range of toys and resources. These are regularly checked by staff to ensure their ongoing suitability and safety for the children to use. Staff and the committee share the responsibility of conducting risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor play areas, along with all outings taken with the children. Staff safeguard children appropriately with their knowledge of the indicators of abuse and neglect. They are aware of the correct procedure to follow if they have any concerns about a child in their care. The group has a range of resources which helps to promote children's awareness of diversity. However, children see few positive images in the setting promoting ethnicity, disability and helping to make all families feel welcome and valued.

Partnerships with parents and carers is sound. When parents first approach the group they receive a welcome pack with details of what the group offers along with an overview of the policies and procedures. Ongoing information is then shared through an extensive range of leaflets, folders, informal feedback at the end of the session and newsletters. The setting recently sent out service users questionnaires to all parents to seek their views. Although parents found staff approachable and friendly they felt that opportunities for them to share information on their child's progress was limited. Some children attending the group also attend other registered settings. Links with these groups have been forged but they have not yet started to share detailed information about children's progress.

Staff and committee members at the group are committed to improving the service they offer to children and their families. Staff use self-evaluation to reflect on their practice in order for them to improve what they offer. For example, they recently had a meeting with the Forestry Commission to enable them to secure an area for forest school sessions. They have also secured funding to enable them to purchase another shade for their outdoor play area. A longer term aim is to improve the building, but this can only be completed in conjunction with the owner of the building. Recommendations raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed, showing a commitment to continuous improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children benefit from the staff's detailed knowledge of their individual needs. Staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and develop. They offer

a stimulating and exciting range of activities and experiences for the children to take part in. Children settle well and are soon happily engaged in the activities offered. Adults are on hand to support children's learning by interacting, questioning and extending children's play. The indoor and outdoor play areas are accessible during each session, giving children choice in which area they play in. Staff plan these areas to ensure that all areas of learning are covered. A range of resources are easily accessible to the children in low level storage units, providing an enabling environment for the children. Systems are in place to observe the children as they take part in both adult-led and child-initiated activities to assess where they are in their learning. However, plans for the next steps for individual children are not always written down, making it difficult to follow if key staff are absent.

Children are confident, happy and settled during their time at the group. They build secure relationships with staff and form obvious friendships with other children attending. Children seek one another out to share experiences, such as, playing hide and seek together. They feel pride in their own achievements, for example, when a child caught a fish when playing a fishing game he exclaimed 'Look I've caught one!'. Children show willingness to tackle problems and enjoy self chosen challenges. They take initiatives and manage developmentally appropriate tasks, such as, pouring their own drinks at snack time. Children are confident communicators with familiar adults. They use vocabulary focused on people that are of particular importance to them, for example, they talk openly about their families. Some children talk activities through, reflecting on and modifying what they are doing. Children listen to stories in large and small groups. They enjoy looking at books, handling them carefully, holding them the correct way up and turning the pages. Children use one-handed tools and equipment, such as, pencils, chinks and scissors, and enjoy a range of mark-making activities. Some children count confidently during everyday routines. Others use number language spontaneously, for example, saying 'I think my auntie's dog is 10 weeks old'. They enjoy joining in with number songs and rhymes. Children find out about the natural world as they look at tadpoles, and grow and care for plants and fruit, such as, tomatoes and strawberries. They enjoy weekly walks to nearby woods where they have opportunities to find worms and spiders and look at spider webs.

Children are learning how to keep themselves safe as staff talk to them about the dangers of using particular resources, such as a rope. They routinely take part in regular emergency evacuation procedures and learn about road safety. Children develop good personal hygiene practices as they line up willingly to wash their hands before they eat. They are offered a range of nutritious snacks and drinking water is freely accessible throughout the session. Children are encouraged to take turns and share by regularly playing board games and independently using a large sand timer. Staff are positive role models for the children with their calm, friendly manner. Children follow this lead and behaviour is good.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
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?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	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?	2
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?	2

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