

St. Catherine's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY304659
Inspection date 08/01/2009
Inspector Anne Sadler

Setting address St. Catherines Community Centre, School Lane,
Manchester, Lancashire, M20 6HS

Telephone number 0161 445 0577

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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. Catherine's Playgroup was registered in 2005. It is registered on the Early Years Register. It operates from one large, ground floor room which is the community centre of St. Catherine's church and school. It is situated in a residential area of Didsbury, Manchester. A maximum of 40 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30, term time only. A lunch club for the children also operates in the same room from 11.30 to 12.30 each day. Children attending come from the local area. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently 56 children on roll of whom 25 receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup employs seven staff, all of whom are qualified or working towards an appropriate early years qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

St. Catherine's Playgroup provides a well organised, welcoming and caring environment for the children and their parents. The well respected and dynamic management team has embraced the demands of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, ensuring that all major aspects are in place to a good standard and the needs of the children are well met. A team of long serving and valued staff help the children to enjoy a wide range of well planned activities and to make good progress. Whilst the group satisfactorily promotes inclusion, record keeping does not fully comply with the statutory requirements and practice guidance. The leadership has a realistic view of the strength of the provision and formal self-evaluation has begun. The capacity for continuous improvement is good and the group goes from strength to strength.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that, whenever possible when children move between settings, assessment information is passed on
- ensure that the observational assessment notes are available only to the child's parent/s and relevant professionals.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management of the playgroup are its key strengths. All the issues from the last inspection have been addressed and a management team of provider and manager has been introduced. The provider and manager form a complementary team. The well respected provider has many years experience of working in a playgroup setting, whilst the dynamic manager is currently studying for a foundation degree and is therefore particularly conversant with the

requirements of the EYFS strategy. Together, they have successfully introduced many initiatives which have led to good all round provision.

Safeguarding procedures are secure. All staff are appropriately vetted and re-checked on a regular basis. Additionally, all other required policies are in place and shared with staff and parents. Self-evaluation is of good quality. It is detailed and shows a clear understanding of the strengths and improvement plans for the group. It has been a useful tool in driving the group forward. As yet, however, it has not been shared with other stakeholders. Staff are well placed to be more formally involved in self-evaluation. They are long serving, well-trained and valued by the children, parents and colleagues. Their individual training plans are impressive and reflect the ethos of the group, which values and develops all.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. They receive written reports each term on their child's progress and the staff work particularly hard to give value to parental comments. For example, a parental concern over possible rough and tumble in bike play was responded to by retaining this important activity but limiting its duration and providing increased monitoring. Parents' opinions are requested to support observational assessments. Parents make very positive comments about the provision. 'The Playgroup is fantastic. My daughter loves it,' said one.

The group's commitment to inclusion is satisfactory, although systems for the sharing of information do not yet fully support the children, particularly at transfer to other settings, or comply with the guidance. The group receives good support from the local authority Surestart team, who visit regularly and provide welcomed training and advice.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The learning and development requirements of the EYFS framework are well embedded at St. Catherine's Playgroup. The key worker system is established and details of allocations are published on the parents' notice board. The group fully recognises the importance of the key worker system and its benefits of continuity of care for children. Consequently this role is only adopted by full-time staff. The teaching of the links between letters and sounds has been introduced to encourage listening skills. This is one of a wide range of activities with which all the children engage readily and happily, individually and in small and large groups. Behaviour is good overall. Staff effectively model the behaviour they wish to promote.

In keeping with the expectations of the EYFS framework, the children are observed on a regular basis at a number of adult-initiated and child-led tasks. Information from these good quality assessments is fed back into their Learning Journey books and to parents. Whilst there is some good practice, the notes from individual children's assessments are not kept confidentially, in accordance with the statutory guidance. However, these notes are used effectively to inform future planning so that appropriately demanding challenges can be provided. It is as a result of these relatively new initiatives of planning, observing, assessing and re-planning, that the

children make good progress, particularly in the areas of personal and social education and disposition and attitudes. Continuity at transition is, however, insecure as these high quality assessments are not yet shared with other practitioners. Outdoor play is available but is limited due to the confines of the building. The children do also, take part in trips out to the park and local environment to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Risk assessments are carried out regularly, resulting in a safe environment. Children's awareness of safety is promoted through activities, such as a visit from the lollipop man. Similarly, healthy lifestyles are encouraged with healthy snacks and drinks and by the use of anti-bacterial sprays. The children have continual access to drinking water. They take part in music and dance sessions which promote their creative and physical development well. Whilst there are currently no children on roll with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, policies and past practice show that the setting ensures they are included in a satisfactory manner.

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?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
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?	3
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?	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.