

St Mary's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 133606
Inspection date 25/03/2009
Inspector Anne Felicity Taylor

Setting address Friends Meeting House, Horse Fair, Banbury, Oxfordshire,
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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 Mary's Playgroup opened in 1971. It operates from the Friends Meeting House in the town centre of Banbury, Oxfordshire. The group has the use of a main playroom, kitchen and toilets. There are three outside play areas. There is a step up to the main entrance. The group is open each weekday between 9.15 am and 11.45, and from 12.15 to 2.45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The group operates during term time only.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children aged two years six months to five years may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 41 children on roll. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children with English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff, four of whom hold qualifications in early years. Children learn through play, and the setting provides funded early education for three and four-year-olds.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children's welfare is promoted effectively and they enjoy all the learning opportunities that are offered. The strong partnership with parents contributes well to meeting each child's individual needs, including the needs of children who speak English as an additional language. Therefore, children make very good progress as they are supported appropriately, taking in account their starting points and abilities. The manager and staff team discuss and evaluate the service they offer regularly, which means that they identify points for change or improvement quickly, in order to meet the needs of children and parents.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further opportunities to inform parents about the variety and methods of learning children are taking part in
- revise complaints policy to ensure details for contacting Ofsted are clear.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

The committee, manager and staff team are focused on delivering an improving service to children and parents who use the playschool, and therefore, children develop and achieve well. All the staff are very experienced and the majority of the staff team hold appropriate early years qualifications. Staff complete short courses and several staff are adding to their qualifications by completing further training.

This means that children are cared for by staff with an up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are robust procedures in place to ensure all staff are suitable to work with children. Visitors are monitored and only vetted staff have unsupervised access to the children. This means that children are kept safe.

Staff have clear delegated roles and take responsibility for equal opportunities, behaviour and child protection. Policies and procedures generally support staff in their care of the children, for example, Special Educational Needs. However, the complaints procedure is not clear as to where to contact the regulator, limiting options for parents to make comments. Staff complete child protection training and senior staff take responsibility for referring any concerns. The child protection policy is clear and easily available to parents, so parents are aware of the duty of the staff regarding keeping the children safe. Daily safety check lists and written risk assessments are in place, therefore children play and learn in a safe and secure environment.

The very good ratio of staff to children, which exceeds the minimum required, is a positive benefit to the children and parents. The time available to chat to parents and carers gives key workers valuable information to enable them to support each child. Good team work means that strategies to enable children to move forward are consistent, for example, behaviour management. Staff routinely evaluate the service they offer. Recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed well. Evacuation procedures are recorded in full and staff introduce simple sums into many routine activities, for example, songs and rhymes. Staff consult the children and meet regularly to plan the education programme and to discuss any issues. They look carefully at the success of specific activities, and how they can be extended in response to children's interests, or adapted to be more interesting or inclusive. This ensures that change can be instigated and improvements put in place with the support of all the whole staff team.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The committee and the whole staff team are dedicated to providing a service which meets the children's needs, and which is always improving. They are continuing to develop their understanding and knowledge of the EYFS, and therefore, provide opportunities that allow children to develop and learn at their own pace and reach their full potential. Children are happy and confident and behave very well. Staff are consistent when handling behaviour, always reinforcing the positive aspects, for example, lots of praise and hand stamps for helping to tidy up. This boosts the children's self-esteem and helps them to learn about reasonable and responsible behaviour.

Clear planning is in place which reflects all areas of the early learning goals and the individual learning needs of the children. Key staff are clear about the needs of each child and therefore can complete relevant observations. The routine of group register time helps the children with their language development, as they speak confidently to their friends. They are also motivated and excited to learn as staff tell them about the adult-led activities available. Children are busy throughout each

session. The indoor playroom is set out with a very wide range of activities for their arrival, which means that the children settle down quickly to worthwhile activities, for example, they 'make tea and cakes' in the home corner, and 'work hard in the office' using the telephones and key boards. Children move freely amongst the activities, making choices and developing play with friends, sharing books and small world play. Staff are skilled at supporting the children's ideas and imaginations, for example, building large towers with blocks, comparing length and calculating the number of blocks needed. The varied outdoor areas available to the playgroup gives the children wonderful opportunities to learn and have fun in the fresh air. Well planned small group projects hold the children's interest, and therefore, they make good progress, for example, creating a sensory garden and using a bubble machine to investigate and chase bubbles.

The friendly and secure environment contributes to the parents, children and staff making strong and supportive relationships. Effective procedures enable staff to build trusting bonds with parents and children who speak English as an additional language, for example, staff learn keywords in the first language, and all the staff and children use simple sign language. Parents are involved using their skills and knowledge to widen the children's understanding, by discussing their work or helping to celebrate a different festival or culture. Therefore, children learn to value and respect diversity. Information is available to parents regarding the EYFS, however, they are not always clear about what their children are learning through the play offered.

The children's welfare is promoted well and the children are kept safe. They learn to keep themselves safe, and about their own community, as they enjoy a visit from a local police officer and the fire service. Children routinely wash their hands before snack, learning about personal hygiene. Children's health and well-being is supported effectively as they develop healthy eating habits, with fresh and dried fruit, whole grain cereal and drinks of milk and water offered at snack time. Staff chat to the children in their key groups about everyday life, which then develops into an active learning experience for the children, as children make 'shopping lists' using pre-reading and writing skills.

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?	2
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?	2
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?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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.