

St Michael's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 509653
Inspection date 17/06/2009
Inspector Sharon Waterfall

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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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

St. Michael's Playgroup opened in 1986 and is run by a committee. It operates from one main room within St. Michael's Church House which is located near the centre of the market town of Louth. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup serves the immediate locality as well as surrounding villages.

A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time and the setting is registered on the Early Years Register. There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an acquired language. The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Monday to Thursday sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00 and 12.30 until 15.00 with an optional lunch club running between 12.00 and 12.30. Children attend for a variety of sessions and can attend either full or part days. Friday sessions are from 09.00 until 12.00

There are five staff who work with the children on both a full and part time basis. Most staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 3 or above. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Staff have attended training on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and are adapting the provision to meet the requirements. A varied range of activities both indoors and out are provided for the children covering the six areas of learning. Staff use information regarding children's interests to provide a more child-led curriculum and parents are kept aware of children's achievements. Self evaluation procedures have led to some changes that have benefited children's learning, with further improvements planned with support from the local authority advisory team.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure session routines, activities and the environment actively increase children's understanding of acceptable behaviour for themselves and others and give them an awareness of the boundaries and behavioural expectations in the setting
- analyse and review what is known about each child's development and learning through the assessment records ensuring they are consistently completed and are used to identify children's next steps in learning.

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

- take all reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to 30/06/2009

children are kept to a minimum, with particular regard to hot drinks in the children's play areas (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

- ensure the record of the risk assessment clearly states when it was carried out, by whom, date of review and any action taken. (Documentation)

30/06/2009

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare is adequately safeguarded as the person with responsibility has completed appropriate training on identifying and reporting issues regarding child protection. An up-to-date policy is in place and is shared with parents. The staff carry out daily checks of the premises and outdoor play area; however, the risk assessment has not identified the risks to the children of staff having hot drinks within the care room. The risk assessment is not comprehensive and does not record who carried out the assessment or the date for review, therefore it is not effective in identifying or minimising all risks to the children's safety. The premises are secure and staff ensure that there is no unauthorised entry; all visitors must show identification and sign the visitors book.

The manager and staff have positively implemented the EYFS and are attending continual training to improve their personal development. The manager demonstrates that she is aware of long term changes and requirements for the setting and has an improvement plan in place that links to the setting's self evaluation. Some changes have already been implemented that enhance children's learning such as obtaining natural and large construction resources and providing low storage for easier access and choice. Changes to the structure of the session have been made which have improved behaviours caused by prolonged waiting, though other traditional routines and how the room is organised can be adapted to further improve challenging behaviours. The staff are committed to improvement and are working closely with the local authority advisory team.

Younger and older children are separated into smaller groups to enable activities to be offered to them that better meet their learning needs regarding ages. All children have a free choice of the activities provided throughout the session, though some activities can be dominated by the same children repeatedly. An appropriate range of resources are provided that promote positive images and respect for different cultures. Relevant information is gained from parents regarding children's capabilities and they are kept up-to-date with children's achievements. They are aware of their child's key person and are shown their learning journeys.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The key person system ensures that one person is responsible for the observation and assessment of individual children's learning needs. However, the information gathered from assessment is not being consistently used to plan children's overall

progress or their next steps for learning. The curriculum is now led from children's interests and these are recorded to be used within future opportunities. The use of the environment has recently been developed to offer the children the ability to free flow through the indoor and outdoor areas. This gives far more free space for the children to play and offers more of a variety of learning opportunities for the children to choose from. At the beginning of the circle time group, a song regarding expected behaviours is sung including 'good looking and good listening'. However, these types of strategies are not consistently used throughout the sessions to ensure children are supported in identifying and valuing positive social skills and behavioural expectations within the setting.

The range of activities cover the six areas of learning and are mirrored indoors and out, such as a role-play home corner inside and a role-play shop outside. Children have opportunities for mark making in these areas but also choose to take the diary from the shop to use at the picnic table. They draw and practise their 'writing', one child is able to write the letter 'M' for mummy, whilst younger children use large brushes in pails of water to make marks. Another draws a line on the ground in chalk to signify a boundary for the wheeled equipment, informing the children that 'S' is for stop. The children look at books daily, sharing them with their friends and listen to stories read by staff.

Knowledge and understanding about the world is explored as the children problem solve how to make the vehicles move in an enclosed dome, by using magnets. Different lengths of barked wood pieces are used by a group of children to build a community for a range of plastic insects. They plant and dig, looking for insects and planting species of flowers that will attract wildlife for them to observe. Creative skills are developed as the children freely paint and have their own representations valued, as well as producing adult-led art work that staff prepare to assess specific learning, such as a card that assesses children's positional language and knowledge as they decorate the edges of the paper.

The sessions support children's knowledge of the importance of being healthy as they provide many opportunities for outdoor and physical play, such as wheeled equipment, slides, swings and climbing activities. Healthy snacks such as fruits, vegetables and nutritious bread products are provided for children to choose from and the children are aware of the importance of handwashing. The children are settled and secure with caring staff that support children's play directly.

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.	2

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?	3
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?	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

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met