

St James Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY339305

Inspection date

08/07/2009

Inspector

Anne Bennett

Setting address

Gledholt Methodist Church, Edgerton Grove Road, Gledholt,
Huddersfield, HD1 5QX

Telephone number

07900853728

Email

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 James's Playgroup is a voluntary organisation, managed by a committee of parents. It opened in 1966 and was registered to these premises in 2006. It operates from the Edgerton Hall suite of rooms within Gledholt Methodist Church, near Huddersfield. All rooms are located on the ground floor of the building and appropriate access via a ramp is in place. The playgroup is open each weekday, with the exception of Tuesday, from 09.30 to 12.30 term time only. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register to care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time. There are currently 36 children on role in the early years age group.

The playgroup employs seven staff of whom five hold appropriate early years qualifications, including one member of staff who holds qualified teacher status. The provision is in receipt of government funding for children aged three and four years and receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is satisfactory. Children are happy and settled within the setting and participate eagerly and with enjoyment. Most children make steady progress and some make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff create a welcoming and inclusive environment for parents, carers and children and in general, parents receive sufficient information about the setting and their child's learning and development. The provider seeks out and values support given by the local authority, and is particularly receptive and responsive to external support in relation to promoting inclusion. The setting has begun to address the recommendations raised at the last inspection and has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- further develop strategies to actively involve all parents and carers in children's learning and development and to ensure that all parents and carers access relevant policies and procedures
- further develop planning and assessment processes to clearly identify next steps for all children and make provision for individual children to support different learning styles
- conduct regular staff appraisals in order to identify training needs and implement a programme of continuing professional development so that these needs are met
- ensure that all practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are secure and well supervised in a clean, safe and suitably maintained environment, where adults are alert to potential hazards. Risks are assessed and managed appropriately, enabling children to freely choose activities, test their skills and make new discoveries within safe boundaries. The provider takes adequate steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children who attend. However, frequent staffing changes have affected systems to ensure that all practitioners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection.

Parents feel valued and welcome within the setting. They find staff friendly, supportive and enthusiastic. Policies and procedures are routinely updated and openly available at the setting for parents to reference. However, not all parents have made use of this facility and some are unaware of key policies and procedures. Parents receive half-termly newsletters providing them with information about forthcoming activities and events. While some parents are effectively involved in their child's learning and development, others do not regularly access or make contributions to children's learning and development records.

The setting has experienced challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of a consistent staff team to ensure key areas of responsibility are shared effectively, particularly during times of staff transition. Despite this, adults work well together as a team and staff are appropriately trained and motivated to further raise their skills and qualifications to level 3 and above. However, appraisal systems are not currently in place and records of staff performance, training and qualifications are not utilised effectively to support staff development and maintain consistent high-quality provision for children.

The provider has a good understanding of the setting's strengths and priorities for improvement. Appropriate action is being taken to address identified weaknesses. Positive working relationships with external agencies have been maintained throughout periods of transition and staff positively engage in training to further support children with additional learning and development needs. The setting has begun to encourage parents to contribute their ideas and opinions about the setting by providing a suggestions box. A questionnaire gathering information from parents about healthy eating options for snack time, has been issued.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Consistent, positive interactions enable children to feel secure, confident and self-assured within the setting. Children are busy, engaged and are offered a sufficient balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and self-selection opportunities across all areas of learning. All children have a learning and development record, which is maintained by each key person. Look, listen and note systems are in place. Some children make good progress, in particular those who are also supported by external agencies. Staff identify any concerns early and share them

sensitively with parents and with other agencies to ensure that each child receives the best possible help where it is needed. In these cases, the setting works co-operatively to identify clear education goals and next steps and support individual children. However, this approach is not consistently implemented with all children and there is limited provision for children's individual learning styles and preferences.

The provision has begun to introduce mark making and reading materials into different parts of the setting to further develop early writing and reading in meaningful contexts such as choosing and booking holidays in the role-play travel agents. The learning environment reflects the importance of language through incorporating books and key vocabulary. Staff effectively use vocabulary prompts in the play dough and sand areas to prompt children to press and notice that their bucket is full. Children develop independence by self-registering at the beginning of the session and actively engage in imaginary play, announcing to enthusiastic staff that there is a dinosaur in the toilet and stomping their feet to create the sound of it walking. Children are provided with natural resources to support sorting, classifying and ordering and enjoy exploring the properties of materials such as sand and play dough. Mathematical understanding is developing through stories, songs including 'Five currant buns' and imaginative play.

Children are encouraged to value and respect others and to understand and develop positive relationships with others who are different from themselves. Children seek out others to share experiences and positive responsive relationships are observed throughout the setting. Together with the support from the early years inclusion service, staff have created a culture that values and celebrates diversity and difference. Children confidently approach visitors to the setting, inviting them to place their ear next to a large shell and listen carefully and to explore looking through both sides of a pair of binoculars.

The provision has been awarded the Kirklees Healthy Choice Award and provides a wide range of healthy, balanced and nutritious food options for children. Although the setting does not have provision for outdoor play, it effectively supports children's choice to be active and to rest by providing a physical development area, quiet places, dens and interesting large spaces for rigorous free movement. Children have first hand opportunities to experience environmental features such as giant African land snails and growing seeds as part of their Spring theme activities. Regular fire safety drills develop children's understanding of danger and how to stay safe in the event of a fire. Children have open access to two computers in the setting and can use a range of software to develop their understanding of number and control of a mouse.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	3

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?	2
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?	2
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 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