

# St. Joseph's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	401997
<b>Inspection date</b>	24/06/2009
<b>Inspector</b>	John Paul
<b>Setting address</b>	St. Joseph's R.C JMI School, North Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 2BY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992 583148 or 07979 001472
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Type of setting</b>	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 Joseph's Playgroup opened in 1994 and is registered on the Early Years Register. It operates from a mobile classroom in the grounds of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic School situated in Hertford, Hertfordshire. The site is easily accessible to wheelchairs, although the mobile classroom itself has steps. The playgroup has sole use of its area. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup at any one time.

The group is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during school term times only. The group also operates a daily lunchtime club from 12.00 to 13.00, which is also open to children in the school's nursery. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 27 children aged from 2 to 5 years old on roll. Of these, 13 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attending the group come from the local area. None of the children currently on roll is identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the playgroup is fully open to them. A few children currently on roll speak English as an additional language.

The Playgroup employs six staff members. Of these, five including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a relevant qualification. It does not work in partnership with any particular settings.

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

The provision at St Joseph's Playgroup is good. It meets the needs of children in the early years age group well. The staff cooperate effectively with its manager and organising committee. All adults involved in the setting ensure that children are included in what is provided and cared for and safeguarded outstandingly well, irrespective of their ethnicity, learning needs or social circumstances. A friendly, open atmosphere is apparent in the club, which is bright and welcoming. The success already achieved suggests a good capacity to improve quality further.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- continue with improvements in accommodation as quickly as possible to provide children with better opportunities to make their own choices about whether to learn indoors or outside.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Good leadership and management ensure that all staff understand and follow the club's clearly written policies effectively. As a result, safeguarding and children's

welfare are extremely high priorities. All staff are highly aware of children's needs. Statutory vetting procedures for staff, and procedures to ensure health and safety all meet requirements. The person responsible carries out and signs off all daily safety and risk assessments very seriously and meticulously. Since the last inspection, the child protection policy has been updated to include procedures in the event of any allegation being made against an adult.

Improvements have also been made to introduce consistent daily plans, showing what children are intended to learn. These are based on assessments of children's previous activities and evaluations of each session. Further development has also taken place to meet the more exacting requirements of the new Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This has been done in consultation with the school's Nursery leader, so the themes and skills that are taught are similar to those in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage. All these changes go further than simply meeting the recommendations made previously, resulting in considerable improvement. The staff, manager and committee members meet regularly to discuss future improvements and any identified training needs are met. Their evaluations of the provision are accurate and promote improvement well.

Involvement with the community is very high and productive. For example, all the committee members, who include the headteacher of the school, are working very enthusiastically to raise funds to meet their vision for new, purpose built-accommodation. This vision includes providing an enlarged outdoor play area for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are on site, whether they attend the school or the playgroup. Parents are delighted with what the club offers and speak very highly of the approachability and helpfulness of the staff. They express a very high degree of confidence in what is provided and how their children learn and progress.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

All the staff are very skilful in engaging the children in activities. For example, children whooped with delight on finding snails when they turned over some stones outside. High quality teaching followed this up with a series of questions that were highly successful in building further on children's excitement and interest, encouraging answers about why the snails had shells, what they needed to stay alive and why we should be kind to other creatures. This promptness in following the children's interests helps to increase their knowledge of the world and broadens their vocabulary and communication skills. Indeed, such opportunities for progress in all areas of learning are typical of what is on offer. What children are taught about being healthy is outstanding. Any food including that at the lunchtime club is kept hygienically and follows the playgroup's policy. Food items are covered at all times until eaten. Children are constantly taught why this is and always wash their hands before eating. Contributions to the community and the development of future well-being are outstanding because the manager and staff alike involve the children in so much of what goes on. The children carry out simple routines, even the two-year-olds, such as self-registering on entry that help the playgroup to run smoothly. The children are encouraged to show and share what they do. This is currently enhanced considerably by performances of

little 'shows' for which tickets are sold, involving the children in fund raising for a new building. This is providing another dimension to the already strong links with the school, which shares in these efforts.

This high quality belies the shabbiness of the building and the lack of permanent shelter outdoors. All adults involved work extremely hard to overcome these restraints, helping children of all backgrounds and abilities to benefit extremely effectively from what is taught. Nonetheless, the accommodation does not fully permit children sufficient freedom of choice to learn and play indoors or outside, according to their own learning preferences.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	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?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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