

St Augustines Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY263188
Inspection date 22/09/2009
Inspector Shirley Ann Jackson

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

St Augustine's Playgroup, a committee run group, is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children aged from two years six months to the end of the early years age group. The group is registered on the Early Years Register. The playgroup has 40 children on roll aged from two to four years. The group is in receipt of free early years education. The group can support children with special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup is open on Monday and Friday from 09:00 to 15.30 and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 09.00 until 12.00 and from 12:30 to 15:30. Monday, Thursday and Friday morning sessions and Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon sessions are for pre-school children only.

Fundraising has enabled the playgroup to lease their own premises, which they moved to in 2003. This consists of a purpose-built cabin, offering an open-plan play room, kitchenette and toilet facilities. It is situated on the Selwyn site, within the grounds of Matson House on Robinswood Hill in Gloucester. Also in close proximity are Moat Primary School and Gloucester Ski Centre and Country Club. The group has the use of a spacious, secure, outdoor grassed area and secure, hard-surfaced tennis courts.

A team of six staff are employed to care for the children. Of these, one holds a Level 4 qualification and four hold a Level 2 qualification and are all currently working towards achieving a Level 3; another member of staff is working towards achieving a Level 2 qualification. A number of staff are trained in first aid and child protection and four of them hold food hygiene certificates. Staff are supported at each session by parents, on a duty rota. The group receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Staff recognise the children as unique individuals and are using the key person system effectively to ensure their care needs are well met. Children enjoy their time at the group and are making suitable progress in their learning and development. Staff promote many aspects of children's welfare with success, ensuring they are safe. However, the regulator has not been informed of an incident, as required. Partnerships with parents and carers are sound but those with other settings which children attend have not yet been fully forged. Staff have started to evaluate their practice to identify their strengths and areas for development.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that the regulator is notified about any serious accident, illness or injury to a child in the setting, and of the action taken in respect of it (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

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

- ensure flexibility in planning for the group, while keeping a focus on child's individual and present learning needs, interests and achievements and make sure that next steps for each child are identified across all areas of learning
- involve parents in their child's learning by gathering information on their starting points, encourage parents to regularly review their child's progress file and to contribute meaningfully to this process
- provide flexible resources that can be used in many different ways to facilitate children's play and exploration
- ensure freedom for children to access resources while ensuring that they develop their understanding of the importance of tidying up and putting things back where they belong
- build links with other settings children attend to ensure that practitioners regularly share the children's development and learning records and any other relevant information

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The group's policies and procedures are in place and accurately reflect daily practice. These are effectively shared with parents and staff and a copy is available on site. The required records for the children are well maintained and stored securely to maintain confidentiality. However, past records show of an incident requiring medical treatment which the regulator was not informed of.

Comprehensive risk assessments have been conducted on the premises, outdoor area and any outings taken with the children. Children are effectively safeguarded through staff knowledge and understanding of the indicators of abuse and neglect. They are aware of the procedure to follow if they have any concerns about a child in their care.

The group is generally well organised. They have sole use of a single storey building with a large playroom and a very large outdoor play area. Staff have introduced a free flow system which is in place at each session. This works effectively to give children the freedom to choose where they play. A range of resources are easily accessible to the children to enable them to self-select. However, photographs on the storage units and on the boxes would enable children to identify what they want to play with and to return it when they have finished with it.

Partnerships with parents and carers are sound. When their children first start, parents are given the group's policies and procedures to read through and they are

able to ask any questions they may have. Systems to ensure that parents and staff share information about what their child knows and can do when they start at the group are in their infancy. Ongoing information is then shared through informal feedback at the end of the day by the child's key person, regular newsletters and notice boards. Opportunities for parents to have regular access to and meaningful involvement in their child's progress file are limited. Parents spoken to at inspection speak highly of the staff, their approachability and the quality of the care they give to their children. Some children attend other settings who also offer the Early Years Foundation Stage. Friendly links with some of these settings have been built, but they do not yet regularly share children's learning and development records.

At the last inspection the group were judged to be inadequate and a number of actions and recommendations were set. Since then major changes to the staff and committee have taken place. A core staff team are now in place along with a new committee. Together they have shown a commitment to improve as they have identified and implemented a number of changes. This includes changes to the way observations, assessment and planning are conducted, improving children's access to the outdoor play area and improving the resources offered outdoors, reviewing practice after each session to identify what could have gone better and developing the key person relationships. This has improved the way the setting meets the needs of all the children and the outcomes for children attending have improved.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children arrive happily at the group and settle quickly. Staff provide an enabling learning environment for the children as a number of resources are available for them to independently select. Staff have a sound knowledge of how young children learn and develop and they are building their confidence in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children benefit from staff interaction and involvement in their play. For example, staff talk to children about how the play dough feels, as children recall that it was warm the day before. A range of adult-led and child-initiated activities and experiences are offered to the children at each session. However, the adult-led activity tends to be aimed at the whole group, rather than being specifically targeted for individual children. There are systems in place to observe and assess the children as they play, noting interests and achievements. However, there is not yet a system in place to make sure that children enjoy activities and experiences across all areas of learning.

Children feel safe and secure and demonstrate a sense of trust with staff. For example, a child said 'I love you' to a member of staff and gave her a cuddle and this was reciprocated by the member of staff. Children have a positive approach to activities and events. For example, children waiting to do a treasure hunt could talk about what they were going to do and were keen to get started. Children form friendships within their small groups and they seek out others to share experiences, such as, singing together. They are confident communicators, confidently talking to staff and asking questions. Children listen to stories in small

groups. Looking through books on their own, they handle books carefully, holding them the correct way up and turning the pages. They enjoy making marks in a variety of ways, such as with pens, pencils and water with paint brushes. Staff promote children's maths skills and language through everyday routines, such as encouraging pre-school children to count how many children are present at the session. Children have opportunities to find out about the natural world and the environment as they look for bugs and insects in the outdoor area. However, resources for children to explore and investigate in a more flexible way are limited. They show an interest in technology and some children know how to operate simple equipment and are able to play on simple computer programmes. Children engage in imaginative play and role play based on their own first hand experiences, such as, taking the 'baby for a walk' and 'cooking dinner'.

Children are beginning to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, they take part in regular emergency evacuation drills and have visits from the fire service and road safety advisors. Children learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. For example, they enjoy healthy and nutritious snacks and follow established routines for hand washing. Children have free access to drinks as they bring a water bottle from home which is readily accessible during the session. Children are able to freely access the outdoor area at every session where they can enjoy activities and experiences covering all areas of learning. For example, children can run around and enjoy the space and freedom which the outdoor area provides or they can sit under the gazebo and read a book.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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