

# St Augustine's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	131737
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<b>Type of setting</b>	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 registered in 1994 and operates from a church hall in Islington. Access to the hall is at ground level via a short footpath. Children have use of a secure outdoor play area. A total of four staff are employed to work with the children. The manager is a qualified teacher and all staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. It is open from 9.30am until 1.15pm every weekday during term time. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. Currently, there are 19 children on roll. The playgroup supports children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

## **The overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The playgroup offers an exciting play environment for children, which encourages their learning and development through a variety of play activities. Staff are very welcoming and actively promote an inclusive environment. They implement appropriate procedures regarding health and safety within the setting. There is a close engagement with parents resulting in children's individual care needs being well catered for and parents becoming involved in their children's learning. Through a system of effective self-evaluation, staff maintain a good overall capacity for continual improvement of the provision.

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

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

- review the practical organisation of each session to ensure a balance of adult-led and freely chosen activities
- ensure that children's behaviour is managed consistently so that they learn to behave in ways that are safe for themselves and others
- review the organisation of snack time in order to provide an effective learning experience for children
- develop a system for monitoring children's progress to ensure that all children's individual learning needs are met effectively.

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

The supporting documentation for the playgroup is informative and well organised, providing a very good framework for staff's practice. There are sound procedures in place with regard to the safeguarding of children while at playgroup. Staff are vetted and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of child protection issues so that

they can readily seek advice if having any concerns. They carry out regular risk assessments of the premises and routine daily safety checks to ensure that the play environment is safe for children. There are appropriate policies and procedures in place relating to health and safety and all records are well maintained. Staff follow strict guidelines to keep children safe when leaving the premises at the end of the session.

The playgroup has an excellent working partnership with parents and carers. Staff liaise closely with new parents regarding children's individual care needs and their individual stages of development. They enable parents to make contributions to children's profile books, thereby involving them in their children's ongoing learning. Parents are very well informed about the provision and notice boards are used effectively to display extra information, for example, about children's key persons, weekly plans and staff training events. Parents are invited to share their skills with children during sessions or to help out on a rota basis. The playgroup has established links with local schools to whom they send progress reports for children when moving on. Parents express much satisfaction with the provision of care and education on offer to their children.

Staff promote an inclusive setting where children can access a wide range of interesting resources each day. In this way, they offer a stimulating play environment that encourages children to explore independently. Staff are deployed to support children in their play and learning in different ways, both indoors and outdoors. However, the practical organisation of each session is not fully effective in offering children a well-balanced session that includes, for example, a range of opportunities to follow up initial interests or participate in adult-led activities. Snack time also lacks an organised approach and therefore does not offer a useful learning experience for children. The organisation of outdoor sessions works very well, allowing children to take part in a variety of activities within a small play space.

Since the previous inspection, staff have improved the educational provision for children, offering a wider choice of learning experiences and differentiating the activities so as to take into account children's individual learning needs. The manager is committed to the continual improvement of the setting and has been a driving force for further development since taking on her role. She and her staff use self-evaluation to good effect in noting the strengths of the setting and highlighting areas for improvement. They seek the views of parents and take these into account when considering changes to the provision. Future plans are well targeted to improve the outcomes for all children, for example, a greater focus on reflecting cultural diversity within the setting. The self-evaluation record is reviewed regularly to enable monitoring of the overall provision, thereby guiding further improvements.

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

Children enjoy very good opportunities for free choice play, benefiting from access to a wide range of interesting resources and activities that encourage them to

become active learners and to develop useful skills. Children show much interest on their arrival and staff offer effective support, joining in with children and interacting to enhance their enjoyment. For example, children increase their communication skills in role play and creative activities as they engage in conversation with staff while mark-making or sticking. Children often become absorbed in independent exploration, for instance, doing jigsaws, making patterns or climbing and balancing. Their self-esteem is boosted when staff talk with them about their pictures and models. As the session progresses, however, children tend to lose focus, especially around planned breaks for handwashing. Their behaviour is generally good and they respond positively to staff, although they are not consistently reminded of the rules so that they learn how to behave in ways which are safe for themselves and others, for example, being aware of the dangers of carrying toys onto the climbing frame. Also, staff do not make good use of snack time to increase children's independence or their awareness of personal safety and healthy eating.

The circle times are used effectively by staff to reinforce and extend children's learning, encouraging children to think and reflect. Daily focus activities offer an opportunity for a focused learning experience, for example, dramatising a story or labelling parts of the body, although these are often not available as an option until later in the session. Children have good opportunities to investigate and learn about the natural environment. For instance, they roll balls down a slide, dig for worms and find out about hatching chickens. They enjoy a variety of physical activities, using both indoor and outdoor equipment. Children develop coordination and balancing skills on the climbing frames and learn to negotiate space as they ride vehicles on the path outdoors. Staff support the development of skills for the future, ensuring children are ready for entry to school, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. They have a comprehensive observational assessment system in place which highlights children's achievements, such as learning to use language to compare and describe, or discovering how clocks work. Targets are set to move children on in aspects of their learning, although children's progress across all areas of learning is not monitored effectively to ensure that children's individual learning needs are always met.

Staff promote children's welfare effectively through their attention to children's individual care needs. They take time to talk with children about their feelings and encourage their participation at group and circle times. Children develop friendships and share fairly when playing together. There are various safety measures in place around the premises to keep children safe and they are closely supervised when arriving at and leaving the playgroup. Staff are reassuring towards children, helping them to feel safe in their care. They remind children to wash their hands when necessary and offer a range of healthy snacks, including fresh fruit and toast. There is close liaison with parents regarding the contents of children's lunch boxes so that children are encouraged to bring healthy foods. Children develop close relationships with staff and these are reinforced at lunchtime when they benefit from the social aspect of eating around tables with members of staff. Through taking part in creative activities based on cultural and religious festivals, children learn about different cultures and beliefs, thereby developing respect for others. They have good opportunities to be active outdoors, benefiting from lengthy periods of play and exercise in the fresh air.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

<b>How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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### Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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