



## St Andrews Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100520
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 November 2005
<b>Inspector</b>	Marilyn Joy
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Andrews Church Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Andrews Church Playgroup opened in 1995. It operates from a church hall in a residential area in Charminster. The small hall forms the main playroom. There is no outside play area, so the playgroup utilises the main hall for physical activities. It serves the local area.

The playgroup is registered to provide places for 18 children between the ages of 2 years and 5 years and there are currently 15 children on roll, of these 9 children

receive funding for nursery education. It supports children with special educational needs and children who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup operates from Monday-Friday, 09.15 until 11.45 term time only.

A team of four staff work with the children. There are two members of staff with early years qualifications and one is working towards a relevant qualification. The playgroup receives support from local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health and dietary needs are responded to because staff have a sound understanding of what they are and ensure they take this into consideration when planning cooking activities and providing healthy refreshments. Children sit sociably together at snack time. They often pour their own drinks and choose what they would like from the selection of fruits offered. There are no facilities for children to help themselves to water at other times of the session if they are thirsty. Most documentation relating to children's health is recorded clearly and accurately.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through daily routines. They wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack. Positive steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection, for example children do not attend if they are ill and they learn about blowing their noses. Suitable hygiene procedures are followed in most areas, although practice is not always consistent.

Children enjoy daily physical exercise. Good use is made of the large hall to provide space for children to explore a variety of large equipment for climbing and balancing as well as music and movement. Many ride bikes competently, learning to manoeuvre around obstacles. They develop hand-eye co-ordination as they handle a good range of resources. They develop skills in using scissors, tools for shaping and moulding dough, brushes and spatulas for glue. Children are beginning to become aware of how their bodies change during activity. Staff talk to them about getting hot and out of breath when running around.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

A bright and welcoming environment is offered where children can explore a good range of resources. Attractive displays and posters decorate the walls. The room is clean and well maintained with suitable flooring for messy play or extensive floor play. The playroom is prepared and set out for children's arrival and activities are attractively presented to engage children's interest. Staff are deployed well and follow effective procedures to ensure children's safety, for example safety checks are completed daily and children are accompanied to the toilets.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and there are appropriate arrangements in place for responding to any concerns, although some written procedures lack detail. A strong emphasis is given to security which ensures the safe arrival and collection of children. Evacuation procedures have been planned so that staff are clear about their responsibilities and can evacuate the premises quickly, although all eventualities have not been fully considered, such as if the main hall is being used. Fire drills are practised regularly so that children are familiar with lining up and leaving the premises quickly.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a good range of resources which are rotated on a daily basis. They are supported by staff who are interested in what they say and do. Children experience a suitable range of developmentally appropriate activities, although they are not always challenging for the more able. Younger children are given time to settle and explore the new environment at their own pace. They receive sensitive support from staff and are encouraged to try different activities. Staff acknowledge that some need to stay with familiar resources before they are ready to explore further.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are sufficiently confident and assured enough to work and play independently and in groups. A relaxed and friendly atmosphere is promoted by caring staff who work well together. Staff use their knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan a range of activities across all areas of learning. Resources are attractively presented to engage children's interest, although some opportunities are missed to extend their learning, for example including relevant reference materials in the role play area or natural materials that can be examined on the science table. Clear observations record what children can do and these are used to assess their progress. There is a good system for collating information from all children's records to inform the planning, however as written assessments do not accurately reflect what children can do, it is not used effectively. Weekly focus activities ensure equal emphasis across all aspects of learning, although participation is not always effectively encouraged or include sufficient challenge.

Children arrive confidently. They are familiar with the daily routines and generally know what is expected of them. Many concentrate and become engrossed in activities, for example, when creating and designing their own collage. They have opportunities to be independent when washing hands and make choices from the activities set out. Children are becoming confident communicators. Most listen well at story and circle time. They chat to each other whilst playing and some confidently contribute in group time. They are beginning to recognise their name at snack time and some know the sound of the first letter, although there are few other routine occasions to become familiar with sounds, letters or words. Children use a variety of resources to promote their pre-writing skills and have some opportunities to experiment with mark-making.

Children enjoy counting. They count how many spoonfuls of flour needed when cooking and count objects on the play dough table. They have few opportunities to become familiar with numerals or link them to counting. A range of resources are used in introducing mathematical concepts for example when filling containers with sand or working out what is heavy and light when putting objects in water. Sometimes learning is limited if there is insufficient support from staff. Many children recognise simple colours and shapes and confidently sort when playing games with staff.

A variety of topics throughout the year introduce children to the world around them when planting bulbs. Visitors from the community help to bring topics alive, such as when learning about road safety. They have some opportunities to find out about other cultures and beliefs. Children confidently use technology and operate simple equipment. They choose what songs they want to listen to and enthusiastically join in with the actions and dance spontaneously to music. They have a good repertoire of songs and experiment with tempo and beat when playing instruments.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children develop confidence in an environment where they are valued and praised. They develop a strong sense of belonging because there are clear settling-in routines which help them to feel settled and secure. All children are welcomed into the pre-school and staff liaise with parents to assist them in meeting children's individual needs. Children are introduced to makaton and sign good morning to each other. Arrangements are in place to support children with special needs and key staff are undertaking further training to assist them in providing appropriate support when needed.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are provided with a good range of general information about the pre-school, its policies and procedures. They appreciate the daily informal feedback from staff about whether their child is settled and what they have enjoyed. Information about the Foundation Stage is included in the prospectus, although parents receive little information about activities, how they can contribute to children's learning at home or children's progress towards the early learning goals.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children develop positive relationships with others. They play co-operatively together, learning to share and take turns. They understand what is expected of them because staff use clear and consistent behaviour management strategies. Children are continually praised and encouraged. Consequently they behave well.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The playgroup meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children are cared for in an organised environment where they feel comfortable and at ease. Space is used well to provide areas for different types of play, particularly regarding the provision of physical play where no outdoor area is available. Staff have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities and work well together to promote positive outcomes for children. A range of policies and procedures define the daily operation of the pre-school, although some do not take all eventualities into consideration. Procedures for responding to complaints and the employment of staff do not reflect current regulations. Most documentation is maintained appropriately and there is a clear system for recording child and staff attendance.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Clear leadership ensures the smooth operation of the pre-school on a daily basis, however management relies on weekly feedback from the supervisor to assess the effectiveness of the provision. There are no additional systems for recognising the playgroup's strengths or identifying areas for improvement in the provision for nursery education. Some aspects of the curriculum are evaluated, although suggestions are not always used to inform future activities. Training is encouraged and used to support staff in the ongoing development of the playgroup. Overall, the children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to the pre-school. They make sound progress towards the early learning goals.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the playgroup was asked to provide opportunities to promote children's independence at snack times. Sometimes children pour their own drinks and prepare the table for snack time, however this practice is not consistently followed by all staff. They were also asked to ensure the child protection policy and procedures cover allegations against a staff member and include details of Ofsted in the complaints policy. Brief information is included in the child protection policy about how allegations would be dealt with and staff are clear about what actions would be taken, however the written policy lacks sufficient detail. The complaints policy was updated with details of Ofsted, although it has not been updated again to reflect the current regulations.

At the last inspection of nursery education the playgroup was asked to ensure that all staff are fully involved in the planning process so that they gain confidence and knowledge in using the early learning goals and ensure assessments of children's learning are used to help implement plans effectively to improve the learning outcomes for children. All staff are involved in planning meetings where they use discussions of previous activities and children's progress to plan future activities. Training is attended to develop staffs' understanding of the early learning goals and consequently children benefit from a broad range of activities, although learning opportunities are missed. Written assessments of children's progress do not accurately reflect what children can do, which prevents staff from clearly identifying their next steps for learning in all areas.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review evacuation procedures to ensure all eventualities are taken into consideration
- update policies and procedures to reflect current regulations and ensure they are effectively put into practise, particularly regarding complaints and employment
- consider ways for children to access water freely and ensure hygiene procedures are consistently followed

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase the opportunities for children to become more familiar with words, sounds and letters, and link numerals to counting
- improve the organisation of activities and resources to challenge children in all areas of learning and maximise learning opportunities presented, for example in the role play area and during focus activities
- develop a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision so that areas for development can be identified and ensure that systems for monitoring children's progress are used effectively to support their learning

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