

Auntie Steph's

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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

Auntie Steph's playgroup opened in September 2003. It operates from new premises, comprising of one large hall and one smaller hall. There are separate bathrooms for boys and girls and disabled facilities. A small kitchen, office and large storage facilities are also used. The playgroup is situated close to two primary schools in the Swinton area of Salford and serves the local community. Children have access to a large outdoor play area.

The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 52 children at any one time. There are currently 68 children on roll. All of the children are on the Early Years Register. The playgroup supports children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The playgroup is open from 8.45am to 11.45am every day, during term time only.

The playgroup employs six staff in addition to the manager. All except one of the staff hold a National Vocational Qualification to level 3. An early years teacher is also employed to support the group. The manager and the deputy hold a level 4 qualification and the manager is undertaking an Early Years degree. The playgroup receives support from Salford Sure Start.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff have a secure awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and children make good progress in their learning. Staff are well qualified, kind and attentive to the children. Inclusion is well promoted and children are happily engaged and occupied in a stimulating range of play activities and experiences. Children's welfare needs are well met. There is an extremely good parent involvement. Parents are fully consulted and kept highly informed of children's daily routines, learning and progress. The playgroup demonstrates a strong capacity for continuous improvement and is aware of where key areas for further development lie.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure focused activities are planned to challenge the more able children and that records indicate this in more detail
- ensure that all areas of play are kept inviting for children during the session, to enable them to be used effectively.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Clear procedures are in place for the recruitment, selection and induction of staff, ensuring that children are cared for by suitable people. Staff questioned at the inspection have a clear understanding of the indicators of abuse and the procedures to be followed should they be concerned about a child's welfare. Detailed risk assessments of the premises have been compiled and daily visual checks are carried out to ensure that children are cared for in a safe environment. A full risk assessment has also been conducted for each outing enjoyed by the children. The entrance to the building is effectively monitored and official identification documents are thoroughly checked before any person not known at the setting is allowed to enter. Effective staff deployment ensures that children are well supervised at all times. All the required documentation and consents relating to the welfare of the children are in place.

The manager works well to motivate staff and to drive improvement. As a result, there is a real sense of team spirit and staff are well supported in accessing training to support their ongoing professional development. Procedures for self-evaluation are effective and take into consideration the views of staff, parents and other professionals. Future plans are well targeted and include the development of the outdoor play area. The playgroup has worked hard since the last inspection to address the recommendations raised. The playgroup has experience of working closely with parents and outside agencies to promote an inclusive and welcoming environment for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The playgroup strives to provide an inclusive service for both children and their families. Parents take an active part in the day-to-day running of the playgroup. Excellent information is sought prior to admission, helping staff to recognise the uniqueness of each child. As a result, new children settle well with the support of a good key-worker system. Parents are provided with a wealth of information about their children's care, learning and development and learning is extended at home. For example, a story sack is sent home weekly to involve the parents in promoting children's reading skills. Planning is clearly displayed and parents are actively encouraged to contribute to children's assessment records and detailed questionnaires. They are well-informed about current events through very detailed notice boards and newsletters. Parents are extremely happy with the care afforded to their children and state that children make progress across all areas of their learning. A fathers week is organised to enable them to become more included in the group. Furthermore, parents are also invited to attend a parent's healthy-eating course to enable them to work alongside the staff regarding children's menus. Links with other settings that children attend, such as the local school, contribute to a smooth transition for children. Furthermore, there are links with the local neighbours as children take thank-you cards to them.

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

Staff have a good awareness of the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of the importance of learning through play. A large amount of print is displayed and there are a good range of resources which reflect children's interests, which are set out each day into clearly defined areas of continuous provision. However, some areas are not kept appealing throughout the session. This results in children not using or staying interested in some play activities as effectively as they could. The staff provide a good range of interesting activities across all six areas of learning. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis on children's choice when planning the children's structured day. Staff obtain good starting points and observe children at play. They use this information to plan children's next steps in learning. Assessments are used to track children's progress and are shared with parents. Children have their own individual files which clearly indicate their good progress across the group and a key-worker system is in place. However, some focused activities do not challenge the more able children and staff do not record enough detail to indicate their key children are being stretched. Children move around their immediate environment with confidence and have the added luxury of freedom of movement between the indoor and outdoor play environments. They thoroughly enjoy the time they spend outside, developing many aspects of their learning as they engage in imaginative role play and explore the varying textures of sand, water and soil. The newly refurbished and welcoming outdoor play area ensures that children practice their balancing and climbing, and access a wealth of continuous provision in all weathers. Recent building work taking place in the garden involves children extending their learning and using bricks of their choice.

Children develop good communication skills as staff engage with them, ask open-ended questions and listen intently to what they have to say. New and interesting words are introduced to help develop children's language skills. Children share very warm relationships with staff and are confident in expressing their wishes and desires. Self-help skills are developing well, as children are encouraged to serve their own drinks at snack time, tidy toys away and hang their coats on the rail. Children thoroughly enjoy listening to a story as part of a group or reading on their own for pleasure. As children build models they are encouraged to identify shapes and to name colours. Number lines are placed around the room and they use dominoes to count the dots in sequence and count the teddies. They tell the time with a variety of clocks and use different weights and shapes. This develops children's mathematical skills.

Many opportunities are made available to children to help develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. The manager brings animals into the setting and children enjoy outings in the immediate locality. Planting flowers and seeds in the outdoor play area allows children to observe growth and they have use of the computer. Recyclable materials are used and children are taught the importance of putting waste in the correct bin to help towards sustaining the earth's natural resources. A rich range of planned activities and resources ensures that children learn about the cultures and beliefs of others. Children fully take part in tasting

foods from different countries. Staff learn key words in children's home languages to help develop communication skills. Children enjoy singing their favourite rhymes, dancing and making sounds with musical instruments. Photographic documentation shows the children have a wealth of opportunities to express their own thoughts and ideas using a variety of creative materials. They explore colour and texture using tactile materials. They dress up, have great fun with the small world toys and show delight during role play in the home corner.

The premises are well maintained, warm and clean. Good hygiene routines are followed and children openly talk about the importance of washing their hands to get rid of germs. Snacks provided are well-balanced and the setting works with parents to ensure any dietary needs are met. For example, play dough is made gluten-free to meet children's individual needs. Children enjoy going to the dentist and are encouraged to use a tooth brush. Good manners are promoted and staff act as good role models with a consistent, positive approach. As a result, children are beginning to manage their own behaviour, for example, by learning to take turns and sharing resources. Children clearly know what to do in the event of a fire and they practise emergency evacuation procedures. To further promote children's safety, children are made aware of the potential dangers of the road and of the importance of not talking to strangers.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	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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