

St Andrew's Community Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Chris Mackinnon

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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*.

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

St Andrew's Playgroup opened in 1984 and operates at St Andrew's Church Hall in Brighton and Hove. Children use a large hall, and also have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup is open from 9am until 11.45am on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and until 3pm on Mondays and Thursdays, term time only.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age group. There are currently 34 children on roll and all are within the early years age group. The setting receives funding for early years education. There is a staff team of seven, and most have early years qualifications and training.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting is effectively led and managed, and children's development is successfully promoted by a confident and experienced staff team. Children enjoy a well prepared and engaging play environment and have frequent opportunities for outdoor play. Staff are highly successful in their planning and organisation of children's learning activities, and excellent observation and assessment encourages children's achievement. The setting fosters close partnerships with parents and other carers, and is inclusive in its support for individual children's development. The setting makes good use of self-evaluation systems and quality assurance schemes to assess effectiveness and maintain improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the presentation of resources to encourage more child-initiated learning and children's creative thinking.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting has a confident and skilled staff team, who are aware of their responsibilities and are well guided by the supervisor's leadership and management initiatives. Staff are well trained and experienced day care practitioners, and individual areas of expertise are recognised and well used to support and widen the range of children's learning. A well established key person system is in place to support individual children's care and welfare, and staff are

effectively encouraged to develop their own ideas and contribute to the planning of play projects and learning themes. This takes place continually, but is particularly well focused during regular staff meetings, where the previous week's activities are assessed and reviewed. Safeguarding and maintaining children's security is well organised within the setting, and staff follow clear policies and procedures to ensure children are protected and kept from harm. Clear written guidance is also in place to support safeguarding practice.

The setting provides a well organised learning environment for children, with a wide range of well prepared play areas. Much good use is made of resources and play materials to stimulate children's interests and awareness. For example, good visual learning material is in place to support knowledge about colours and letters, and children are encouraged to recognise their names on a display board at the start of the session. A good range of resources are also presented to encourage art and crafts, messy play and access to books. Resources are effectively presented to support mark making and art and craft activities, and children greatly enjoy role play and using a wide range of assembly systems. Children benefit from frequent outdoor play in the setting's well prepared outdoor play area, and have opportunities to access a good range of resources to promote their physical confidence. Staff are aware of the importance of fostering child-led play and helping children to follow their own ideas. Staff consistently review the presentation of play materials, and recent initiatives combining resources to offer more challenging play is clearly benefiting children's creative thinking and enjoyment of learning. The development of more discovery based and child-initiated play is therefore noted as the setting's main area for improvement at this time.

The setting is consistent in supporting individual children's development and progress across learning gaps. Staff place an emphasis on developing language and communication, and have experience in working with children with disabilities. Staff take care to ensure all children are included and have a high level of one-to-one contact. For example, children who are new and becoming familiar with the setting frequently choose to play on their own and staff are able to provide close support and encouragement. Children are effectively provided with activities to encourage awareness of diversity and peoples differences. Well planned play projects throughout the year help children to understand about other cultures. A good example is the setting's planning of a series of learning activities based on Japanese art and culture.

The setting's approach to maintaining partnerships with parents and other carers is well organised. Staff have make links with other local care settings and parents benefit from close and frequent contact with their children's key person. Parents are encouraged to become helpers and assist with the play programme, and parents have regular opportunities to review the detailed and consistent information that is gathered on their children's progress and achievement. Parents and children are well supported during settling in periods, and parents are successfully encouraged to become involved with their children's learning. For example, at the end of the morning play period, children and staff enjoy a music and movement session, which parents can also join before going home. Staff at the setting make good use of starter sheets to learn about individual children's

interests, and key staff gather information from parents on children's home experiences. A weekly newsletter also keeps parents updated on current play themes and initiatives within the setting.

The staff show considerable confidence in their application of reflective practice, and use consistent methods to assess the effectiveness of the setting's play programme. Regular staff meetings are well used to review the success of activities, and make revisions and changes. Key staff also take this time to discuss individual children's progress and achievement. The supervisor and staff have together completed the Ofsted self-evaluation document, which has helped to identify a number of areas for development, particularly with widening support for parents and children's access to play resources. Since the last inspection the setting has successfully met all the recommendations made, with significant improvement in the use of observation and assessment, which is now judged as outstanding. Overall, the setting's commitment to maintaining continuous improvement is strong and well established.

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

The setting's organisation of children's learning development is highly effective, and an outstanding aspect of the provision. Staff provide an excellent range of play themes and topics that are successfully planned to engage children's interest and enable learning. Detailed and comprehensive planning systems are used to ensure staff present a full range of play and learning activities, and the preparation of the play environment is consistently well managed. The planning has particularly strong features in the inclusion of focused learning opportunities, where staff can develop a particular area of learning, such as knowledge of the world or promoting numbers and counting. The staff show particular skill and expertise in their ability to develop children's enjoying and achieving. They provide well timed prompts and use excellent questioning techniques to encourage children's play ideas and achievement. Staff have a consistently effective understanding of the six learning areas, and can move between them effectively to extend learning. Staff also have their own areas of expertise which are well utilised, within the provision. For example, one staff member may focus on promoting children's relationships, and another takes the lead with providing expressive music and movement sessions. The quality of the setting's observation and assessment is exemplary. Each key person keeps and updates their children's learning records, which include excellent observation notes and information to maintain learning progress. Children's next steps are well monitored in the record books, and clear data is built up over the weeks to support children's way forward with their learning. Photos of the children engaged in activities also feature throughout the books, which parents particularly appreciate as they follow their children's development.

A well organised range of features are in place to maintain children's safety. Staff carry out daily checks of all play areas, and the setting's risk assessments are thorough and consistently reviewed and updated. New children are closely supported and staff spend time with them providing cuddles and close care as they

become familiar with their surroundings. The setting safely organises planned outings within the local area to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. These also involve the children in learning about road safety. Children visit the nearby Tesco store and go to the beach for picnics, often with accompanying parents. Staff pay close attention to promoting children's healthy growth and development, and staff successfully support children's independence with their personal care. Children learn about healthy eating and have well organised snack times where they are encouraged to help. For example, individual children can take turns at becoming snack helpers, which fosters sharing and cooperation. Children have frequent activities that are linked with food, and many of the setting's learning themes support the children's understanding of health and fitness. Support for children's physical development is well included in the play programme. Children enjoy playing outdoors, where they can develop their climbing and running, and their balance and ball skills. Indoor games and activities also encourage children's physical confidence, with active role play and daily music and movement sessions.

The promotion of children's skills for future learning is outstanding at the setting. Staff settle children well and from commencement, a clear picture of their learning needs is established. Children's communication and speech development is consistent and highly organised, with frequent opportunities for mark making and learning to write. For example, children have a daily story time, and books feature well in role play and within the outdoor learning resources. Children have group learning times, where they learn to say letter sounds and sing songs that develop their use of words. Staff are highly organised in their promotion of children's problem solving and understanding of numbers. For example, children practise their counting at group assembly time, and are encouraged to use their fingers during counting games. Children develop a good awareness of shapes and sizes, with a well presented assembly and connecting resources used to promote manual skills, and provide building challenges. The promotion of children's creative development is strongly featured, with many opportunities provided for art and crafts, and cutting and sticking. Children have a wide range of role play opportunities and enjoy dressing up, particularly as princesses. Children generate their own play easily and staff encourage children to make up stories and have imaginary adventures that often include the use of outdoor play resources. Staff have recently begun to present specific combinations of play resources to challenge children's creative thinking and stimulate play. For example, by placing big builder blocks next to dinosaur play figures and books about dinosaurs, the children are encouraged to explore and be inventive with their learning.

Staff are highly effective in encouraging children to interact positively with others. Consistent support and close guidance is provided to establish good behaviour and help children to make a positive contribution to the setting's play sessions. Many of the planned activities successfully foster children's personal and social learning. For example, at set times during the morning children gather together as a group and are encouraged to sit and listen and take part in a group activity, such as singing or reading a story. Children learn about feelings and how to understand the needs of others through the effective use of story books and the events within them. During child-led play, children often display consideration for others. A good example was observed when one boy took time to explain to his friend how to

make a pop-up activity toy work. Overall, the setting places a strong emphasis on helping children to feel included and able to move forward with their learning.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2

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	1
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	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met