



## St Mary's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133606
<b>Inspection date</b>	02 February 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Stella Grace Dykes
<b>Setting Address</b>	Friends Meeting House, Horse Fair, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 0AE
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Mary's 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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Mary's Playgroup opened in 1971. It is managed by a committee of parents. It operates from the hall of the Friends Meeting House, in the town centre of Banbury in Oxfordshire.

The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45, and from 12.15 to 14.45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It operates during term time only. Children have access to two secure enclosed outdoor play areas.

There are currently 48 children aged from 2 years 6 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 35 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The group currently supports some children who speak English as an additional language, and some children who have special educational needs.

The group employs six staff. Of these, three, including the manager, hold an appropriate early years qualification. A further two staff members are working towards a qualification. They are supported by volunteers.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy good health because staff take steps to protect them from infection, for example by having good hygiene regimes. Children begin to learn about safeguarding their own health, as when they make sure that their hands are clean before snack time. Staff can act in children's best interests if they become ill while in their care, because they have relevant information about children's health needs, and consent from parents to do so.

Children regularly take part in activities to help them to learn new physical skills, and to practise existing ones. They play parachute games, and use the climbing frame and balance beam indoors. They play outside in the fresh air when the weather is suitable, using cars, bikes, and other wheeled toys.

Children have a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks that are suitable for them. They develop their independence skills as they take turns to help to serve snacks, choose for themselves, and pour their own drinks. Children sit together at colourful tables that match the cups and serving plates that they use, and that coordinate with their key worker group colours. They enjoy sociable snack times, chatting with each other and with staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children are confident and at ease in the comfortable and familiar surroundings that the group provides. They play in a hall that is made bright and child-friendly by displays of posters, pictures and children's artwork.

Children choose for themselves from a wide range of toys and play materials. Items are of good quality and well maintained. They are stored so that children have easy access to them. Children use child-sized tables and chairs, and they can relax on the soft seating provided in the book area.

Children are kept safe by the staff's effective safety regimes, for example, by being vigilant and supervising children at all times. They maintain high levels of security throughout the day. Children are familiar with some of the group's safety procedures,

as staff regularly practise fire drills with them. However, staff do not record enough detail after drills to allow them to identify any difficulties.

Staff promote children's welfare because they have a good understanding of their child protection role. They know what might be cause for concern, and the procedures to follow. They share their role with parents, so that they can work together to get the best outcomes for children.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled, and enjoy their time in the group. They have warm and affectionate relationships with each other, and with the staff. They play enthusiastically, both at structured activities, and in child-led play.

Children make progress through the good range of interesting and exciting activities that staff provide. Staff know the children well, and are able to meet their individual needs. They provide good levels of care. Some staff have attended additional training, to help them to further improve the care and learning experiences of the youngest children who attend.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. They plan a wide range of activities, which help children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff note children's achievements, and use this information when planning activities, so that children are sufficiently challenged.

Children are keen to explore new experiences, and focus well on their chosen tasks. They generally behave very well. Older or more able children are able to explain the reasons for some of the behavioural boundaries in the group.

Children communicate easily and effectively with each other, and with known adults. Some older children are confident enough to initiate conversations with adults that they do not know. They enjoy looking at books, and handle them with care. They are learning that writing carries meaning. Older children correctly identify the sounds that familiar letters make.

Children confidently choose from the wide range of resources available for them to write and make marks. For example, they make shapes and patterns with their hands and with tools in foam on a table top. They develop their abilities, so that they become skilled at holding and using pencils correctly. They are keen to follow the shape of their names using pencils, and some older children are able to write their first names without adult support.

Children are becoming familiar with mathematical concepts, for example "full" and "empty" and older children use mathematical language in their play. They compare and contrast objects, and correctly identify which of a number of items is large and

which are small. They count confidently in a group, with older and more able children counting up to 10 and beyond. However, they do not have regular opportunities to use early calculation in their everyday activities.

Children use paint, glue and other materials imaginatively, exploring their texture and properties. They enthusiastically join in with familiar songs and nursery rhymes, becoming confident enough to suggest which ones to sing next.

Children are developing a sense of time through the group's consistent routines. Some recall and talk about past events. They are interested in the simple computer games that the group has. Younger children can manipulate the mouse with adult support, while older ones are accomplished at doing so to achieve their aim.

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

The provision is good.

Children receive good care because staff know them well and so can meet their individual needs. Children have equal access to staff's time and attention. There are very good arrangements to make sure that all children are fully engaged in the life of the group, for example, staff have a list of whose turn it is to help at snack time, so that children who attend only once a week do not miss out. Staff have very good systems in place to meet the differing needs of children who speak English as an additional language, and to identify and support those children who have special educational needs.

Children generally behave very well, because staff are skilled at diverting them away from unwanted pursuits and towards activities that are more productive. Children learn that good behaviour is valued, because staff praise them for behaving well. Children develop a high sense of self-worth, which is a significant factor in their good behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. They have regular opportunities at the beginning and end of session to exchange information with staff, so that they can work together in children's best interests. Parents are kept well informed about the group's activities by means of a regular newsletter, and by the parents' notice board. Children benefit further from the active involvement that some parents choose to have in the group. For example, parents volunteer to support staff during sessions, so that they can bring an extra dimension to children's play and learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from the group's good organisation of space and resources, and from effective staff deployment. Staffing levels are good, and the staff team works well together so that children can make the most of the play and learning experiences provided for them.

There are efficient procedures in place to make sure that staff are suitably qualified or experienced, and that they undergo relevant personal checks. All the necessary records and documents are in place to help staff to ensure continuity of care, and to maintain children's health and safety.

Leadership and management are good. There are efficient arrangements to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education, which leads to continuing improvements in outcomes for children.

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

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

At the last inspection, the group was asked to review hand-washing procedures and to make sure that children could not have access to poisonous plants in the garden. They have made improvements to ensure children's health and safety by introducing additional hand washing procedures, and by making sure that children cannot access poisonous plants.

The group was also asked to make changes to some of its recording practices, and to some parents' information and consent forms. These have been attended to, so that the necessary documents are in place to promote children's care and learning, and the efficient management of the group.

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

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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 good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

### **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):

- record more detail in relation to fire drills, and use this information to amend procedures if necessary

### **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):

- provide children with more opportunities to use early calculation in everyday activities

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)