



St Augustines Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131737
Inspection date	26 January 2006
Inspector	Maxine Rose
Setting Address	108 Highbury New Park, London, N5 2DR
Telephone number	0207 704 8003
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Registered person	St Augustines Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 Augustine's Playgroup opened in 1962 and operates from one large room within a church hall in a residential area of Islington. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00, term time only.

There are currently 10 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these eight children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local

community. The group currently support a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The group employs three staff. All of whom, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

The setting is supported by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children routinely take part in some planned activities that help to promote a healthy lifestyle. The children are encouraged to dress appropriately for the winter weather they wear hats, coats and gloves to keep warm when outdoors. The staff implement some practical procedures to ensure children are cared for in clean surroundings for example food surfaces are cleaned after use. When indoors the children practise washing their hands before and after meals, however the arrangements for hand-washing do not fully ensure the prevention of cross infection. Children enjoy healthy snacks during the session, consisting of fresh fruit, juice and milk. This helps children to maintain a balanced diet and promotes healthy growth. At times children's access to fresh drinking water is limited as this is not served everyday. The daily routine is organised well to ensure children have good opportunities to extend their physical development both in and outdoors. Children enjoy energetic forms of exercise when pedalling tricycles, pushing wheelie toys and running at full speed when outdoors. They confidently mount the large climbing apparatus when indoors showing increasing skill when crawling through small spaces and balancing on beams. All children use a range of small equipment such as construction, pencils, scissors and paint brushes, these activities develops children's hand and eye coordination as well as improving their dexterity. The children receive appropriate primary care from the staff members who are trained in first aid for babies and young children there are also clear procedures for the administration of medication. The children receive appropriate primary care from the staff that are trained in first aid for babies and young children. Staff take appropriate action when dealing with minor accidents and have clear procedures for administering and recording medication given to children. This helps to safeguard children's well being.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The children benefit from being in an environment where some practical measures are in place to safeguard their welfare. The children's safety is maintained in some areas by the organisation of space, furniture and play equipment. Much of the furniture and play equipment are safely contained on low shelves and units. The children are able to access equipment easily and use the space effectively for a host of activities which include painting, sand, and water play and, building with

construction sets. The staff implement some practical safety measures. These include guarding heating appliances to prevent children having direct contact and in most cases ensuring ratios are maintained throughout the day to ensure children are properly supervised. Occasionally staff are not deployed effectively outdoors in particular to monitor the use of the gates. The group have a comprehensive risk assessment procedure, safety matters relating to outings and the collection of children are given sufficient emphasis ensuring appropriate consent is maintained and children are collected by known adults. At times risks assessments are not used effectively to identify possible hazards relating to the climbing equipment. The children are protected by staff's knowledge of child protection procedures. Staff are trained in child protection and have further opportunities to update their understanding through a yearly training programme. Staff members are aware of the signs of abuse and the process of record keeping and referrals.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

The children benefit from having a flexible routine that is organised by staff who are familiar to them, this helps them to settle well and build strong relations with the staff and each other. The children have access to a range of interesting play materials and age appropriate activities that enhance their learning experiences and help them to make progress in all areas of their development. The children develop their independence as they serve fruit at circle time, select resources that interest them and help to clear away resources at the end of the session. Children use their imagination well to express ideas, for example when making models out of play dough, building with construction and when enacting scenes in the 'Post Office'. They are willing to try new things and embrace challenges with increasing confidence, for instance when baking fairy cakes for tea and balancing on the tall climbing apparatus. The children enjoy many opportunities to develop their social skills. The children are relaxed in their environment, they communicate with ease when making requests or when enjoying light conversation with key workers and peers. The staff plan activities that interest the children, however staff are less confident about delivering the Birth to Three Matters framework into the programme for younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children are making suitable progress in some areas of their learning owed to the staff who plan some activities well and provide some interesting resources to motivate the children to learn. The staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the early learning goals and Foundation Stage of learning. Although staff plan a range of activities for the children plans lack detail, not all areas of learning are covered sufficiently to extend children's learning fully. This is combined with the lack of effective assessments to identify what children have achieved and to plan for the next stage of learning. Although the staff know the children well at times they do not always adapt activities appropriately to ensure the full inclusion of children with English as a second language and those less able. The children behave well and have a growing understanding of right and wrong. They are

well supported by the staff who set clear boundaries for how they should behave and commend them for their efforts. This creates a stable learning environment for the children. Older children are developing appropriate social skills that enable them to form good friendships. They are polite and cooperative, taking turns to share resources and helping out with routine tasks such as serving food at circle time. The staff provide a range of appropriate resources to develop children's early writing skills. The children use pencils, crayons, paint brushes, felts and chalk to practise mark making, however the provision for developing children's early reading skills are less well developed. This is partly due to the lack of staff deployment in the book area and insufficient emphasis on written words. Most children listen attentively to stories being told, older children retell parts of the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and conclude with "the end". The staffs make good use of teaching aids such as puppets and picture templates to stimulate the children's interests and make learning fun. Although older children show an interest in books their literacy skills are not being stretched enough because they are rarely introduced to text or helped to spell out familiar words. All children are learning to recognise their names and those of others as they collect their name cards and register their attendance in the morning.

The children enjoy a variety of creative opportunities. They develop their finer physical skills and use their imagination in inventive ways for the purpose of singing, painting, printing, collage, drawing, and cutting, sticking paper and role play. The children are proud of their achievements and their efforts are harnessed positively by the staff who praise, encourage and display their work. For example children are told they do 'fantastic' work when they decorate stencils. Whilst the children embrace role play situations staff are not always suitably deployed to enhance children's learning for example in the 'home' corner. The children develop an awareness of the community they live in and the wider world through themed topics which introduce them to different cultural festivities such as Chinese New Year, Hanukah, Christmas, Eid and Diwali. Children also have access to resources that represent positive imagery of culture and diversity such as dolls, books, sari's and garments tailored from ethnic prints. This helps children to develop an appreciation of others. Children have fewer opportunities to use programmable toys and question how and why things work because the programme is limited in this area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The children behave well. They are learning to work together harmoniously as they share and take turns with resources. The staff know the children well and value their individuality; this builds children's confidence and gives them a sense of belonging. At times activities do not always take full account of the individual needs of children who speak English as an additional language. There is a good selection of resources and displays that promote diversity and the children are learning about the wider world. The group have clear procedures for how children with special educational needs can be fully integrated in the setting. There are some practical ways for children to develop their communication skills such as through listening to stories where they learn new words, however there are fewer opportunities for children to

work in small groups or on a one to one with staff and activities are not sufficiently adapted to meet their learning needs. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. The parents are the management committee. They are warmly welcomed into the setting by the staff and are invited to contribute to children's learning in practical ways through decision making or organising activities for the children to enjoy. The staff help to keep parents informed about their children's progress and forthcoming events through verbal discussions, newsletters, and the notice board. Some useful information relating to activities is displayed on notice boards and in group rooms. At times the communication with parents does not fully ensure their concerns are resolved effectively.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All of the staff are suitably qualified. They operate a key worker system for all the children. This helps staff to learn about the needs of the children thus promoting a trusting relationship.

The setting is organised well and provides space and essential resources for the needs of the children, which help to enhance their learning and play opportunities. There are suitable policies and procedures in place to promote the children's welfare and safety almost all are implemented appropriately. Comprehensive procedures are in place for the recruiting and induction of staff.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff work well as a team to coordinate their roles and plan for children's learning and development. They have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and the stepping stones and this helps to ensure children make satisfactory progress in their learning. There are opportunities for staff to develop professionally through training; such incentives help to motivate a long serving staff team. Whilst the staff are active in monitoring children's progress they sometimes miss the chance to complete assessments and follow this through effectively by evaluating their findings and using the information to plan for the next stage of learning. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The group has made much progress since the last inspection. Procedures relating to managing children's behaviour, complaints, attendance, medication and the exclusion of children who are ill have been up dated. Children can receive appropriate support and guidance when they display inappropriate behaviour owed to the clear statement on anti bullying. Children's welfare and wellbeing is safeguarded in positive ways because parents are better informed about how to make complaints, clear records ensure children are suitably monitored and receive appropriate care and attention if they are ill. The group were asked to review hygiene practices however this has not been implemented fully as there remain some shortcomings in

the arrangements for hand washing.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are 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.

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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):

- ensure the arrangements for children washing their hands do not compromise their health.
- provide children with fresh drinking water throughout the day.
- ensure risk assessments are used effectively to identify potential hazards and that staff are suitably deployed outdoors to supervise children's activities

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):

- ensure the programme for communication, language and literacy include sufficient time for older children to develop early reading skills, ensure the environment stimulates children's interest in written words and that staff are suitably deployed to interact effectively to extend children's learning.
- provide opportunities for children to investigate programmable toys and question how and why things happen.
- ensure children are grouped appropriately and activities are suitably adapted to meet the individual needs of children with English as a second language or those less able.

- make effective use of assessments: evaluate what has been learnt about the children and plan for the next stage of their individual learning

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