



Clockhouse Methodist Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137287
Inspection date	24 February 2006
Inspector	Denys Rasmussen
Setting Address	Clock House Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4JP
Telephone number	020 8663 6149
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Registered person	Clock House Methodist Church Pre-School Group
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?

Clockhouse Methodist Church Pre-School Group is run by a management committee. It has been registered since 1990. It operates from two rooms in a church hall in Beckenham. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time.

There are currently 20 children on roll from 2 to 4 years, and of these 15 are funded for nursery education. Children are admitted from two and a half years. The playgroup is open from 09:30 to 12:00, each weekday except Tuesday and every

eighth Thursday, during term time only. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

Children attend from the local community. The pre-school currently supports children with special needs.

The group employs four staff. Two staff have an appropriate early years qualification and two staff are unqualified. The unqualified staff will be attending training for an NVQ this year.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

All staff are trained in first aid, ensuring that accidents are dealt with appropriately. Accurate records are kept, for example, about any accidents that have occurred. This ensures that children's health needs are met and information can be effectively shared with the parents. However, the pre-school do not have written consent to seek emergency medical treatment or advice, which means parental wishes are unknown. The pre-school keep satisfactory records about children's health needs and dietary requirements, including any allergies. These are complied with to keep children healthy.

Children are encouraged to wash their hands, helping them to develop good personal hygiene habits. The use of liquid soap and paper towels helps to prevent the risk of cross contamination. However, the use of the communal washing bowl compromises this. The risk of the spread of infectious disease is restricted, because of the pre-school's sick child policy.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. Each day there are physical activities to help them develop control of their bodies. For example, as they play head, shoulders, knees and toes and negotiate the climbing frame and slide. Games and indoor music and movement sessions improve children's physical skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment, where their work is displayed. The premises are an old church hall. However, the staff set out the resources thoughtfully and provide a comfortably warm environment with a range of activities, to promote children's development. Play materials are checked for safety and are appropriate for the children's age and stage of development. Risk assessments are carried out. However, electrical appliances have not been checked for safety, therefore it is not known whether or not they pose any risks to children. The layout and space available allow children and adults to move safely and freely between activities.

Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures, so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Children learn to keep themselves safe when staff remind them of the rules, such as not bringing physical toys up the step, for instance the 'hopper', tidying up and not hurting each other. Children learn about road safety when the road safety officer visits the pre-school and activities and discussion take place. Positive steps have been taken to promote the safety and security of the children. For example, exit doors are kept locked and there are good systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of the children.

Children are well protected; the staff recognise their responsibility to the children in their care. Key staff have attended up-to-date child protection training, ensuring the correct procedures are followed if there are any concerns about a child's welfare. The comprehensive non-collection and missing child policy help to protect children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children are happy to be at the pre-school. They arrive enthusiastically and quickly settle to an activity. Children who are less settled are skilfully reassured by staff and given cuddles, to enable them to separate from their parent voluntarily. Children's independence is encouraged, when they choose what to play with and tidy away with confidence. All the children take part in the programme offered throughout the day, helped by support staff. This keeps them busy and interested and helps them progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress. The staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. Children come in confidently and settle quickly, choosing from the activities set out by staff. They talk easily to their friends and are familiar with the expectations and routines of the setting. They sit on the step when it is time for a change in the session, singing the countdown song and telling each other 'it's tidy up' time, when toys have to be put away. They are polite and behave well. Staff interact in a supportive manner, they praise the children and remind them at snack time who has behaved well. They are given special responsibilities, such as putting out the cups, to develop their self-esteem. Although staff do plan activities and relate them to the early learning goals, they are basic and do not include all aspects of the provision. This means the learning objectives are unclear for some routine activities. The activities are evaluated, but the plans lack detail to allow them to build on what children already know. Children with special needs have their next steps for learning identified as part of their individual education plans. However, other children do not, so it is unclear how assessments link in with planning.

Children enjoy story time and participate eagerly. Staff ask questions about the stories relating it to children's own experience to make them think. Children often visit the book area and enjoy books with their friends. The children are recognising their own names with the help of name cards, which they find when they arrive at pre-school. Labels are used creatively to help children associate words with objects

such as chair, table, climbing frame and slide. Writing materials are available for most of the session, encouraging pen control and confidence in attempting to write. Staff exploit opportunities throughout the pre-school routine to encourage children to count. For example, they count heads at snack time and count backwards when waiting to start the next session. Children sing number songs, such as 'Five little monkeys jumping on the bed' to introduce them to early calculation. The children know how many fingers to hold up when told a number up to five.

Children use the computer to complete simple programmes and practise mouse control. During water play the children discuss volume and floating. They are introduced to nature when using the outdoor area. They search for mini beasts with a magnifying glass to look closely at them and look at pictures in reference books. They plant seeds and learn that plants drink through their roots, not their flowers. They look at life cycles when they see frog spawn change. Staff provide imaginative activities to engage children's interest. For example, they bring a beach to pre-school for sea side play with ten bags of sand, large paddling pool, beach umbrellas, Punch and Judy and ice cream. Children learn to design when they put track together, make junk models and follow plans to construct magnetic blocks. Children explore colour at the painting easel and most children differentiate colour; however, more able children are not being given sufficient challenge. For example, when sorting by colour, it was noted that the activity was too easy for some of the group, but there was no indication of how the activity could be extended.

Children use small equipment such as threading, scissors, rollers, cutters, stencils and the computer mouse. They use malleable materials such as play dough, spaghetti, corn flour and clay. This helps develop their hand to eye coordination and physical skills. They roll the play dough between their hands and make sausages, whilst singing five little sausages sizzling in a pan. The session is split into two; the second half focuses on promoting physical and imaginative development particularly. Children practise ball skills, use wheeled toys, balance and climb. Music and movement sessions are offered on a daily basis. They sing finger rhymes and large action songs, such as 'Sleep little bunny'. The children are enthusiastic and enjoy participating. This helps them to gain control of their body. Children lie on the floor playing co operatively with small world equipment. For example, two children make car noises as they push them around the track they are sharing. Children enjoy playing with puppets. For example, one child with dinosaur puppets on each hand walks around the pre-school making fierce noises, laughing as the staff join in. Children play in the role play area; they play house and shopping making up scenarios. Children experiment with a variety of musical instruments, they sing songs and play the instruments to the rhythm, smiling and making a lot of noise.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents. Good settling in procedures, which are flexible and parent led, ensure children settle well into pre-school life. Home visits are offered if preferred. The relaxed introduction helps children to begin to trust the staff and has a positive impact on their

development and learning. They experience consistent care, because the staff know them well and communicate daily with the parents.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Parents are given a useful booklet, welcoming the family to the pre-school, and are made aware of the group's policies and procedures. Parents are encouraged to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the pre-school. The parents are given satisfactory information about the Foundation Stage and the activities the pre-school provides. Although there is daily verbal feedback, there are no formal systems in place to share the children's progress or to identify their next steps for learning, unless they have an individual learning plan. This means that not all the children's developmental assessments plan for their next stages of learning and are not shared with the parents.

Children with special needs are very well supported and their welfare and development promoted, because staff work closely with parents and outside professionals. The high ratio of staff to children ensures children's additional needs are well met. Support staff work with key children to implement the child's individual learning plan. Resources positively represent the children attending, as well as individuals from the wider community. The supportive attitude of the staff and the inclusive environment encourages children to develop a positive attitude to each other. Materials are selected to help children develop self respect and to respect others. Children are taught the sign for animals, when singing 'Old McDonald had a farm' to enable all the children to participate. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children build good relationships with staff and are happy and secure in their environment. Children's self esteem and confidence is supported through the positive, gentle and friendly interaction of the staff, as they learn to be kind to each other. The staff are skilled at responding sensitively, aware of each child's level of understanding. The relaxed structure, routine of the session, realistic boundaries and one to one, help children to behave well.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff, who have been appropriately vetted, due to satisfactory recruitment procedures. All required documentation, policies and procedures are in place; however, some lack detail. Nevertheless, they work well in practice helping the safe management of the pre-school. The above minimum ratio of staff to children ensures that children receive a good level of individual attention and are cared for by consistent staff. This enables them to meet children's individual needs and support children with additional needs well.

Leadership and management of the nursery education are satisfactory. Staff development is encouraged, ensuring practice is up-to date. Staff have a sound understanding of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and how to apply this in practice, to support children's development. However, the children's assessments do not include next steps for learning and the planning of activities lack

detail, which means it is not always clear how to move some children on. Space, staff and resources are well organised to create a stimulating and accessible environment, where children are busy and occupied throughout the session. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last childcare inspection, the pre-school has ensured that the hall is kept satisfactorily clean. There is a cleaner employed to clean the hall daily. The fire drill record has been improved and now includes the number of adults and children present, along with the time it took to evacuate.

Since the last nursery education inspection, the nursery has developed the programme for language and literacy, to include more opportunities for children to spontaneously and independently enjoy books. This will help to promote early reading skills. Staff's knowledge has been increased through training and they now have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage, which is used as a basis for the support of children's learning.

The system for sharing assessments with parents has improved, but the pre-school are still not identifying all the children's next steps for learning. This means parents and staff are not always aware of where some of the children need support.

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.

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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 that procedures for hand washing prevent the risk of the spread of infection
- request parents permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice
- ensure electrical appliances are safe
- update the complaints procedure to bring it in line with current legislation and ensure parents information reflects this

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 that all the children's developmental assessments plan for their next stages of learning and are shared with the parents
- improve the planning of activities and take into account how to build on what children already know

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