

St John's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 974633
Inspection date 23/09/2010
Inspector Mary van de Peer

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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 John's Playgroup opened in 2001 and is a church committee run setting. It operates from two rooms within the St John's Community Centre in Margate. It is situated close to the town centre. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. It is open Monday, Thursday and Friday from 9am to 12pm and Tuesday from 9am to either 12 or 3pm; it operates during school term times. Children have access to a small outdoor play area. There are currently 18 children in the early years age group on roll. Children come from the local area. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs four staff. All staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications at Level 2 and 3. The playgroup receives support from the local authority. The setting is on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of all the children generally well. Children enjoy their time at the setting and are supported appropriately by staff. The individual needs of each child are known and addressed. The setting is making satisfactory progress in maintaining ongoing improvement. Systems are developing to assess what works well and what needs to be improved to promote effective outcomes for the children attending.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure the observations and assessments carried out identify children's individual learning priorities and are used to plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child
- ensure planning systems and daily routines are effective and consistent in meeting children's individual needs and promotes their independence
- support and value children's home language and individual educational needs by building on the links with parents, to ensure children can benefit from a wide range of meaningful contexts in which they have opportunities to further develop English
- develop further the self evaluation and reflective practice systems to help ensure continuous improvement in the setting and the outcomes for children

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are appropriately safeguarded and their general welfare is promoted well through clear child protection and safeguarding procedures. Staff have access to a range of child protection guidance in the event of a concern. All the required paperwork is in place, for example, registers and an accident record book. All staff have attended a recognised first aid training course, enabling them to provide appropriate care if any child suffers a minor injury. All staff have a level 2 or 3 child care qualification. Additional child care training has been attended by all staff, with further courses planned. The group has the required procedures in place for staff recruitment and vetting. A child is never left alone with anyone who has not had the relevant checks carried out. A main risk assessment is carried out regularly and additional daily checks help to minimise any risks to children's safety. Children are able to play within safe boundaries. An effective sick children policy helps to reduce the risk of cross infection, promoting their welfare and well-being.

The group shows it has a commitment towards continuous improvement but the strengths and weaknesses of the provision are not being clearly evaluated. Staff are able to talk about the areas they want to develop and where they feel they are doing well; for example, extending the free flow play opportunities for children, both inside and outdoors. The previous recommendations from the last inspection have either been partially or fully addressed. This goes some way to help improve practices and benefit the children attending. There is a wide range of good quality toys and activities available every day for children to enjoy and learn through their play; for example, role play resources, mark-making and creative play materials. Staff are deployed within split age groups of children, however, this practice appears to result in different methods being used in observation and assessments systems. This means there are inconsistencies in the way children's progress is recorded and how their learning priorities influence future planning. All children are encouraged to take part in the activities provided, for instance, at circle time. Policies and procedures are written inclusively. However, children, whose home language is not English are not always able to benefit from appropriate support, such as a specific range of meaningful activities where they have opportunities to further develop their English.

The setting is building links with other local providers, including childminders and the Sure Start Children's Centre. This is beginning to help staff strive towards all children receiving consistency of care and benefiting from sharing information on their individual needs and progress. The partnership with parents is positive and developing well. Parents and carers are provided with a range of written information and guidance and have the opportunity to discuss their children's care and progress daily, if they wish to. They feel their children enjoy coming to the setting and find the staff friendly and approachable. These partnerships help to support the children's needs and provide them with continuity of care.

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

Children show they feel safe and secure in the playgroup environment, as they move easily round the play area selecting their chosen activities. Clear storage boxes are used so that children can see what is inside. Children are able to make decisions about what they want to play with, as well as taking part in some adult led activities. Staff are attentive, caring and interact positively with children in their specific group. They sit with the children either on the floor or at a table. At circle time all the children sit together with members of staff and they look at the weather calendar, children enjoy speaking up with their views on if it is windy or not. Children count together how many are sitting in the circle, showing that the older children can count over ten. They finish the circle session with a couple of rhyming songs; even the youngest children, who have recently started at the group, attempt to join in. In the home role play corner a three year old is doing the ironing and she talks about how her mummy cooks cakes for her at home. Mark-making resources are readily available and children use wax crayons to create colourful designs on paper. The playdough table is well used and children are able to use a variety of cutters and rollers, making and molding different shapes. These activities help to develop fine motor skills. Children can access small torches that they take into a tent lined with black material, creating a dark environment. They have great fun shining them around the tent, learning the contrast between light and dark. However, there are no other resources placed inside the tent to extend the enjoyment of this popular activity. A mat and cushions create a comfortable area where children can choose a book to sit and look at on their own or with others. This helps them learn to respect and value books and develop reading and language skills. Healthy snacks, consisting of fruit, cheeses and crackers, are provided daily for all children. Water is available throughout the sessions to help ensure children are adequately hydrated. Snack time provides opportunities for the older children to think about what they want to eat and to serve themselves, promoting individual choice and independence. However, for younger children, this activity tends to be adult directed, limiting the opportunities to further encourage their independence.

Staff provide support to those children who have just started, helping them to settle and gain confidence in their new surroundings. With the help of parental input, children's individual needs and interests are identified and recorded when they start at the group. Starting points are recorded and cover the areas of learning. Subsequent observations begin to chart children's development; however, their learning priorities are not clearly identified and recorded to help influence future planning. Staff offer play opportunities that build on children's known skills but information from observation and assessment is not used effectively in the planning and preparing of activities. In addition, the planning system, which covers all areas of learning, is not led by the individual needs of the children.

Children do not have free access to the outdoor play area but staff take them out at least once during a session. Children are able to use wheeled toys and participate in short bat and ball games. However, there is little planning involved to ensure outdoor play is more purposeful, providing better quality outcomes for

children. This is an area identified by management and staff for improvement. There are few opportunities provided that enable children to learn about diversity and the world around them, such as picture stories, factual books and small world figures. Some children who attend the group come from other cultures and backgrounds, which helps all children develop respect and an understanding of the differences in people..

Staff are not always consistent in dealing with challenging behaviour. This means that some children maybe unsure of what is expected of them at certain times, for example, at circle time. However, the majority of children, especially the older ones, are learning to develop a responsibility for their actions. They are able to play cooperatively together and respond to praise and encouragement from staff, promoting confidence and self esteem. Any concerns over behaviour are discussed with parents and strategies can be implemented, such as the involvement of other professionals. This helps towards ensuring the individual needs of children are met effectively. Overall, a warm and welcoming service is provided where children enjoy themselves and learn through their play.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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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