

St Matthews Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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Setting address

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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 Matthews Playgroup opened in 1990 and is managed by a voluntary committee of playgroup leaders, parents and members of the parochial church council. The playgroup operates from the church hall of St Matthews Church in the Kingsdown area of Bristol and serves the local area. Children have access to the main hall, a side room and an enclosed, outdoor area. The playgroup opens four mornings and two afternoons a week during term time. Sessions operate from 9am to 12 noon and 12.45pm to 3.15pm on Monday and Wednesday and from 9am to 1.30pm on Thursday and Friday, including a lunch club.

The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 28 children in the early years age group may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 44 children aged from two years to under five years on roll. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and a number of children learning English as an additional language. The group provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds.

A team of eight members of staff work with the children, six of whom have appropriate qualifications. Of these, two are working towards a further qualification. Two staff have Qualified Teacher Status, one has an Early Years Degree and one has Early Years Professional Status. Additional support is available from parents volunteering to help. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and of the Bristol Association for Neighbourhood Daycare. The playgroup has enrolled to work towards the Bristol Standard Quality Assurance Award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The playgroup offers a fully inclusive environment where children settle to be secure and happy. Children achieve outstandingly in all aspects of their learning and development and, generally, the monitoring of their progress is successful. A very strong emphasis is placed on meeting individual needs and staff organise most routines and experiences to be interesting and stimulating. Children's welfare is actively promoted through excellent health and hygiene arrangements and many strategies to foster children's safeguarding. Systems to work in partnership with parents, carers and other agencies are highly developed though links with other providers are less robust. Excellent commitment to ongoing improvement mean that areas for development are systematically identified and effectively addressed, resulting in improved outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- check that the risk assessment covers anything with which a child may come into contact, including cleaning chemicals in the toilet cupboard
- implement strategies to ensure that the suitability of staff members is regularly reviewed
- review monitoring systems to check the rate of progress that children make in each area of learning
- build links with all other providers offering the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure all adults take part in assessment and so that there is continuous and consistent care.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well safeguarded, because of the staff's up-to-date knowledge and understanding with regard to child protection procedures. Thorough and effective written statements and procedures are known by all staff and are well shared with the parents and carers. For example, visitors are always accompanied and all staff are vetted to protect children. However, there are no systems in place to check staff's ongoing suitability. Staff carry out and record detailed risk assessments to ensure the safety of the children at the premises and on outings. Although staff have identified storage of church's cleaning materials as a possible hazard, this has not yet been resolved. All other areas are checked on a daily basis and sheets signed to show the assessment for their safety and suitability.

The staff highly promote equality of opportunity. As a result, children make outstanding progress in their understanding that, although everyone is different, all are just as important. Excellent deployment of the wealth of high quality resources enables children to self-select toys of their choice; these are well labelled and many are stored within their easy reach. Meaningful plans include diversity, as children learn about their world through stimulating activities based on different festivals and investigation of countries visited by children. A wide range of resources reflects positive images of gender, age, disability and culture, including books, pictures, musical instruments and dolls.

The partnership between staff and parents is exceptional, with both parties liaising closely to ensure children receive the care and education they require. Parents report of their immense satisfaction with regard to the information shared about the children's progress and fully appreciate the efforts made to include all family members. Sound systems are in place, although are not currently implemented, to link with other providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff work substantially with all agencies and other professionals involved in the care of individual children.

The playgroup staff are, overall, well qualified and continue to attend a variety of training so they retain and further increase their considerable level of early years knowledge. The committee and committed staff work as a dedicated team as they are self-motivated and eager to maintain continuous improvement. They employ successful methods of reflection and self-evaluation in which all parents and children are encouraged to participate. These effectively help to identify the provision's considerable strengths and aspects for in-depth development so that plans for the future are accurately targeted.

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

The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning is outstanding as they make significant gains in their learning and development. Their individual achievements are consistently very good in relation to their capabilities and starting points though monitoring does not make the rate of progress clear. Children benefit highly from the support of key persons who know them very well, and who observe and assess them closely to plan and organise challenging play opportunities. The individual needs and interests of children are given significant consideration when planning the extensive range of activities, including for those learning English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children are confident in decision making and efficiently organise their free play times.

Children develop very good skills for their future by eagerly extending their literacy, numeracy and understanding of technology. They gain a love of literature through skilful storytelling and enjoy many highly accessible books. They demonstrate considerable problem solving skills and show great persistence in completing activities to their satisfaction. For example, they find the figures to show the high number of children present and create a working marble run. The children delight in planting fruit and vegetables, including strawberries and a pumpkin, and freely explore to make very good use of their senses in the developing outdoor area. They design using tools and materials of their choice and construct complex crafts, including happy and sad puppets to express their own emotions and ideas. From a young age, the children play an important part in the life of the local community, for example, experiencing family outings to woodland and taking part in local festivals.

The children are extremely happy to attend the group and make a positive contribution that benefits all. For example, they rapidly learn to sign words in different languages and are invited to bring words from their home languages to share. Children quickly make friends and often play cooperatively, as in their complex role play. They show care and concern for each other as they share resources and take turns, for example, with new technology programs. Their strong desire to participate in the special activities offered stimulates great excitement, including creating gingerbread men with a real chef, and they delight in the results. Children are keen to investigate changes, such as creating shiny coins by soaking tarnished ones in vinegary ketchup and are fascinated at the

outcomes.

Children feel safe and secure in the group as they have strong bonds with the adults caring for them. They learn to keep themselves safe as they use tools correctly, including a knife to carefully prepare snacks. They have good opportunities to take small risks in controlled circumstances as they negotiate the rough ground in the woodland area and search for mini beasts, such as woodlice. Children have an excellent understanding about the importance of healthy lifestyles, choosing to spend time out of doors in the fresh air where they enhance their fitness and stamina and making healthy food choices at the rolling snack time.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
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	1

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	1
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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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