

Methodist Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Lynn Hughes

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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

Methodist Church Playgroup was registered in 1994 and is committee owned and run. It operates from a large hall within the Haverhill Methodist Church in Haverhill. A fully enclosed garden provides an appropriate area for outdoor activities. The pre-school is open from 8.45am to 11.45am five days per week during term time only.

A maximum of 24 children under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time, all of whom may be in the early years age range. There are currently 23 children on roll. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who are learning English as an additional language. This provision is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

The pre-school employs five members of staff. Of whom, three staff members hold a Level 3 qualification and two staff members hold a Level 2, one of which is also a fully qualified SENCO.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children's welfare, learning and development needs are met to a good standard by a strong team of committed and stable staff. The setting has clear policies and procedures in place which staff understand and follow. Staff demonstrate secure knowledge of the children in their key person groups and talk confidently about their individual requirements and learning styles. Staff have a good working relationship with parents of the children attending and work well with other local settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. At present, systems to enable the setting to monitor, review and evaluate its provision for children are not effectively implemented.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review the organisation of snack and meal times to ensure every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs
- lead and encourage a culture of reflective practice, self-evaluation and informed discussion to involve all staff in identifying the setting's strengths and priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are well protected as staff demonstrate secure knowledge of safeguarding issues and their responsibilities with regards to protecting children. They understand the setting's procedures and know how to refer any concerns to the appropriate authority. All adults working at the setting are vetted and proof of their clearance is held on file and accessible for inspection. The setting effectively monitors any visitors and keeps a clear record of their attendance. Children play in a safe and well-organised environment as staff have rigorous procedures in place for checking the premises each morning before the children arrive.

The pre-school operates in a large church hall which staff set out and present each morning. They ensure that the environment is child-friendly, exciting and welcoming as they place posters and bright pictures around the walls. The toys and play resources are positioned on low-level tables and large floor mats, enabling children to make firm choices over their play and to guide their individual learning. A good adult-to-child ratio ensures that children are well supervised and supported throughout the pre-school session and staff are very knowledgeable about their daily roles. The setting is firmly committed to providing opportunities for staff to pursue further training to enable them to develop their childcare practices and expertise.

Parents provide very complimentary feedback on the provision and the commitment and professionalism of the staff caring for their children. Many parents specifically choose the setting based on positive feedback they receive from friends and relatives. Clear written and verbal information is available for parents informing them about the setting and what their children have been doing each day. Staff have a good working relationship with outside agencies and endeavour to aid transition to school by liaising with local schools and encouraging teachers and other professionals to visit the pre-school.

The staff team has remained stable and consistent for many years, with some of the staff working together for over twenty years. The team are supported by a small voluntary committee. Staff are beginning to share tasks and responsibilities, for example, the organisation of paperwork and documentation, while others put together the planning taken from individual children's next steps. The setting has plans for the future which include further developing their systems for observing and assessing children's progress and for reviewing the records. Staff meet each day to discuss the session with a view to evaluating the effectiveness of the activities provided and the learning outcomes achieved. At present, however, these discussions and further systems for evaluating the setting are not well evidenced or used to fully identify areas of strengths or those which require improvement.

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

The quality of the provision for children's learning, development and welfare is good. Children enjoy their pre-school experience and excitedly participate in an interesting range of free play and planned activities. They are provided with good opportunities to make choices about whether they play indoors or outdoors as the setting benefits from being able to offer free-flow outdoor play. An interesting selection of resources and activities enable children to explore all six areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. For example, role play in both areas enables them to carefully tend to the needs of their babies, carrying them around in the pretty Moses baskets. They have fun playing with sand and water in the outdoor area. They transport sand from one container to another and talk about what happens when they do. Children enjoy being creative as they paint masterpieces on the painting easles, cut shapes from a range of paper and create collages from feathers, ribbons and coloured lolly sticks. Staff have a clear system in place for observing children's progress and achievements and recording them in their individual learning journeys. They use their observations to plot children's next steps in learning and to inform the overall planning.

Children's participation in a wide range of different play opportunities enables them to develop essential skills for the future, for example, they practice mark making with a good range of materials and some children write recognisable letters. They are beginning to recognise their names when they self-register and when they choose their name from the board at snack time. Children are confident and independent. They use the adjacent toilets proficiently with little support from staff. Adults encourage children to make decisions about their play and to follow their own interests. Children's self-esteem and confidence are promoted as staff offer them praise and encouragement and enable them to think about others and how to be kind and caring.

Children behave in ways which show that they understand how to keep safe and healthy. They know that they must not run indoors and that they need to use their indoor voices when the noise level rises too high. Staff develop children's understanding of safety issues through lively discussions and appropriate activities. Children understand good hygiene practices, such as regular hand washing, and talk confidently about the way in which they wash away germs. A well-balanced and nutritional mid-session snack is provided for children by way of a rolling snack bar. This enables children to freely choose when to stop playing and to eat and drink. At present, staff prepare and present the snacks, providing limited opportunities for children to participate in this activity or to develop their independence with regards to using appropriate kitchen tools.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
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	2

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	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
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