

St Andrews Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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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 Andrews Playgroup has been registered since 1977 and is registered on the Early Years register and both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is managed by a committee and the playgroup can care for a maximum of 30 children aged between two and eight years, at any one time. The playgroup operates from a church hall in Dartford, Kent. There are currently 42 children, aged from two to four years on roll. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.30pm every day.

There are eight members of staff, six of whom have appropriate early years qualifications and all are very experienced. All staff hold a current first aid certificate. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are progressing very well in most areas of learning as a result of the playgroup staff's knowledge and support. Observations are used to highlight how children are progressing and to identify next steps for children's individual learning. Learning records contain some useful information. Engagement with parents is promoted extremely well through the sharing of information both verbally and in writing. Partnerships with outside agencies ensure appropriate support is given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup staff demonstrate a good capacity for improvement as all previous recommendations have been comprehensively met and systems for self evaluation effectively promote 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:

- extend further the range of opportunities to introduce children to cultures and religions, taking into consideration the diverse backgrounds of children attending
- improve the system used to record children's achievements to show clearly how they are making progress in all areas of their learning and the next steps identified for their further development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The staff team demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of the children in their care. They know the procedure to follow in recording and reporting any concerns of abuse or neglect. The designated member of staff with overall responsibility for child protection undertakes regular refresher courses on this area to update her knowledge. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all staff are appropriately checked to ensure their suitability to work with children. Regular risk assessments are completed for all areas of the setting and any hazards are recorded and minimised. As part of the risk assessment accident records are reviewed regularly to ensure that action taken to minimise potential risks is effective. Clear procedures are in operation regarding arrival, safe collection of children and security of the premises. The identity of visitors is checked. These precautions help to provide a secure, safe environment where children can play.

A wide range of resources and toys are available around the setting to promote children's all-round learning. Toys are in very good condition and suitable for the ages and stages of children attending the playgroup. The staff demonstrate a positive approach towards diversity and inclusion. Child record forms and initial settling-in sessions are used to establish any dietary, religious, cultural or linguistic needs. Children use a wide range of resources that depict positive images of diversity and reflect many of their cultural backgrounds. These help children to feel valued and included. For example, a language pen and activity cards that can be translated from a child's first language are used to support children learning English as an additional language. Staff plan activities to help children learn about different cultural festivals but these do not always include those celebrated by the families who use the playgroup.

When planning for children's individual needs staff take account of their age, gender and individual character. All children are highly valued within the setting and additional support from outside agencies is obtained where necessary, to ensure children's individual needs can be met. Partnerships with outside agencies are well developed and the level of support given to children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is excellent.

Engagement with parents is excellent. Parents are very happy with the playgroup and praise the friendly, approachable staff team. Parents are invited to contribute to their child's 'unique story' from the start and staff really value their input, translating the documents where necessary to ensure that parents with English as an additional language can contribute to this fully. Parents are actively involved with the ongoing observation and assessment process as they are able to look through their child's 'unique story' each term and make comments about how they think their child is progressing. The 'tree of knowledge' also provides parents with opportunities to share anecdotes about their child which staff can then use in their planning and to encourage language and communication.

Staff have addressed all the recommendations made at the last inspection and have further enhanced areas within the setting to improve outcomes for children, for example in the outdoor area. Their written self-evaluation document clearly identifies the changes the setting has made to improve outcomes for children and additional areas it is planning to develop further. The Supervisor is very experienced and has a committed and consistent staff team who work well together. Staff deployment is good and this ensures children's safety as well as providing valuable learning opportunities. For example, staff sit with the children and join in their conversations asking open-ended questions to extend children's communication, understanding and vocabulary. The staff team ensure that they keep their knowledge up-to-date by attending regular training and workshops.

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

Children experience a broad and well balanced range of activities and experiences in the indoor and outdoor environments. There is a good mix of adult directed and child initiated activities. Children learn about colours, shapes and number through the different activities available. The staff team actively contributes to and extends children's learning through skilful questions and the introduction of new vocabulary. For example, following a story about a fish staff introduce an activity relating to floating and sinking. Children have the opportunity to choose items and experiment to see whether they float sink in a tank of water. Many children identify initial letters and sounds on their name cards at snack time, on their artwork and on their named pegs kept by the art and craft area. Staff extend the learning of those who are ready by introducing the initial letters of other words.

The key person and buddy system ensures that staff know each child individually and plan effectively for their needs. The key persons use the starting points outlined in the initial forms completed by children's parents/carers and highlight children's progress in the six areas of learning through observations. They use information gathered to inform future planning, making sure all areas of learning are incorporated and individual learning promoted. However children's progress records do not always show the next steps for children's learning clearly across the six areas of learning to assist others in supporting children's progress.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment where a high standard of hygiene practice is maintained. All children learn about hygiene routines through washing their hands at appropriate times throughout the session. Children have helped to make posters for the toilet area providing reminders to wash hands. Children are developing valuable healthy eating habits as staff encourage them to try a wide variety of different snacks. Independence is extremely well promoted during snack time as children choose from the selection of snacks and drinks available and serve themselves. Individual dietary needs are very well met by staff; they are aware of children's allergies, cultural and religious restrictions and dislikes.

Children learn to keep themselves and others safe. They practise the emergency evacuation procedures regularly to ensure that they are clear about the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency. Children are well behaved within the playgroup because the staff are firm and consistent in their management of any inappropriate behaviour and use plenty of praise and encouragement to promote good behaviour. Strategies used are relevant to the age and level of understanding of each individual child. Staff encourage good manners and turn taking which help the children to establish close relationships with their peers.

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	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	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