

St Michaels Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date

17/11/2011

Inspector

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Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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 Michael's Playgroup is privately owned. It originally opened in 1967 and was re-registered in 2007. The playgroup operates from a large hall within the St Michael's and All Angels church building in Loughton, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open Monday, 8.30am to 2.30pm; and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8.30am to 11.30am and 12pm to 3pm, term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 47 children aged from two to under five years on roll and the playgroup receives early education funding for three- and four-year olds. Of these, 27 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs seven staff. Five of the staff, including both managers, hold appropriate early years qualifications, to at least level three. One staff member is currently attending training. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The management and staff team promote some aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework requirements and are working to develop a more inclusive and culturally diverse environment. Children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development. The staff team are currently working hard to develop a more systematic approach to planning and assessment, in order to tailor provision more closely to the individual learning needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff keep children safe by having a good understanding of safeguarding procedures, however, hazards are not always minimised to ensure that children are kept safe in the setting. The management and staff team have the capacity to self-evaluate their practice with children and are working towards constant improvement for their benefit.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- ensure all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that hazards to children are kept to a minimum, for example, access to the outside via the unlocked kitchen door (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 17/11/2011
- improve observational assessment procedures to identify young children's next steps in their 17/11/2011

developments and to meet their individual needs (Organisation).

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

- increase opportunities for children to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The management and staff team are well informed about safeguarding procedures and know where to make referrals. Designated staff are allocated responsibilities to oversee key areas of the provision, for example, safeguarding, behaviour, and first aid. Record keeping and documentation that is required for the safe and efficient management of the setting is maintained, and are regularly reviewed and updated. However, the door to the kitchen is kept unlocked; potentially allowing children to access the main exit. Although staff are vigilant, this has an impact on safeguarding and breaches statutory regulation to keep minimise risks and keep children safe. Staff are deployed sufficiently to ensure that children are supervised at all times and give good quality interaction with the children. Children are offered a selection of resources within a child friendly and welcoming environment. Equality and diversity is promoted sufficiently with the provision, although the managers have identified ways to improve this to ensure that children know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people. Staff demonstrate they have some knowledge about children's welfare and family background. For example, they are fully aware of children's health, dietary and care requirements, such as their allergies and dietary requirements. However, there are further opportunities to develop relationships with parents with English as an additional language and develop understanding of diversity among the children that attend the setting. Children are provided with some resources that foster an awareness of diversity in society, for example, puzzles and culturally diverse small world play. The provider is fully aware of children with learning difficulties and the extended services available to parents. Specialist staff working with the local authority and other professionals are welcome to visit and give advice and guidance about the best ways to offer support. In addition, visits are arranged with some of the children's new schools and teachers are invited to come to the pre-school which enables acceptable transitions to schools and appropriate partnerships with other professionals.

The management team have various systems in place to self-evaluate and parents views are considered and they have identified some areas for development. For example, the provider has plans to purchase more resources for children to use information and communication technology. This ensures children's learning is further enhanced. The management team are working hard to improve the planning and assessment of children. This work is at an early stage, however, and it has not begun to impact fully on children's learning and development, which is currently satisfactory.

Parents receive appropriate information about the setting through daily discussions, and they receive samples of their children's work. A range of policies, including equality of opportunities, and complaints are in place and shared with parents to ensure they are aware of the setting's professional responsibility. Key workers keep learning journals with observations of children, photographs and examples of their work to share with parents to provide adequate information on how well their children are achieving. Parents give good feedback and positive comments about the setting and comment on that their children have settled very well and enjoy coming to the pre-school.

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

Children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals. Children demonstrate an enthusiasm for play which the provider and keyworkers encourage and support. Although planning is written in the form of medium term, and weekly, the individual needs of the children based on their abilities and interests is not clearly evidenced. There are a range of systems in place to observe and document children's progress and capabilities. However, children's next stages of development are not consistently recorded in observation documents meaning that children's individual needs are not effectively planned and children may not always be appropriately challenged in the activities.

Children are making satisfactory progress in their social skills. Children take pleasure in sociable snack times when staff sit with children, engaging them in conversation and talking to them about the healthy foods that they are eating. Small groups of children sit together at snack time and they are encouraged to independently choose their healthy snack of cheese, kiwi, banana and breadsticks which is attractively presented on a shared platter. They thoroughly enjoy and interact when the provider sings Christmas songs. Children have opportunities to mark make in corn flour and also with the use of pencils and crayons. However, crayons together with other creative resources are not arranged so that children can easily reach and initiate their own play. Children have sound opportunities to develop their problem-solving, numeracy and reasoning skills. They create patterns with coloured pegs and count throughout their play. Children have some opportunities to develop their creative skills, during role play they use plastic food to 'go shopping' and staff effectively encourage skills of collaboration and sharing. Children explore glue and glitter to create snowflakes and receive good quality interaction and support from staff.

Children are beginning to learn about healthy lifestyles. They develop their physical skills in the outside area by playing with large cars and climbing equipment. Children learn appropriate hygiene routines as they independently wipe their hands with wet wipes before sitting down to eat their snack and washing hands after a creative activity.

Children develop a suitable understanding of how to stay safe as they sensibly walk around the premises and are gently reminded by staff not to run indoors. The

provider practises and records fire evacuations regularly with the children. This ensures they are learning about their own personal safety. Children are developing strong self-esteem as staff listen attentively and value their contributions. For example, staff get down to the children's level and show genuine interest as they talk enthusiastically about their play and home lives. Staff are sensitive towards young children that are new to the setting. They are reassuring and kind to the children who are settling in and skilfully distract them by encouraging them to join in the activities.

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

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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