

St Marks & Hesters Way Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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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*.

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Description of the setting

St Marks and Hesters Way Playgroup first opened in 1961 and is situated in a community centre to the north of Cheltenham town centre. The playgroup is managed by a committee of parents and is registered on the Early Years Register. The playgroup is registered to provide care for a maximum of 30 children from two years to the end of the early years age group at any one time. There are currently 33 children on roll; of these, 14 children are aged two years. The play group receives funding to provide free early education for three and four-year-olds. The playgroup serves the local community and is open each weekday during school term times. Sessions operate either from 9.20am to 12.20pm, 12.30pm to 3.30pm or from 9.20am to 3.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup has use of one main playroom, the hall and two other rooms at different times. There is an enclosed garden area with hard surfaces for outdoor play. The playgroup committee employs five staff members, including the overall manager. There are four staff who work directly with the children. Two staff, including the manager, hold relevant degree level qualifications and Early Years Professional Status. The play leader holds the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Childcare Learning and Development. Two other staff hold relevant childcare qualifications at level 3.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy, confident and demonstrate they feel safe. They enjoy their time here and are able to have continuous play between inside and outside during the sessions. At times physical activities provided for the children by staff are not planned sufficiently well, and as a result space in the room is restricted. Staff deployment around snack times can be disorganised which has an impact on children's behaviour. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory, but although staff have started to put in place links with other settings children attend regular information sharing does not take place. The staff have worked hard to improve the setting's weaknesses since the last inspection and demonstrate a sound capacity for continuous improvement. A detailed action plan is in place and targets areas to benefit the children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review how the indoor space is planned, so that it can be used flexibly, with particular regard to providing an appropriate space for planned physical activities

- consider how staffing arrangements are organised so that children are supervised adequately with particular reference to snack times
- improve links further with other relevant providers to ensure children's learning and development records are regularly shared to enable continuity and coherence in their learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a suitable awareness and understanding regarding the safeguarding procedures. Detailed risk assessments cover all areas of the setting, including outings. Daily risk assessments are completed with the children which helps them develop an understanding about how to keep themselves safe in the setting. Smoke alarms are fitted in the room and fire evacuation procedures are practised regularly with the children. Clear records are kept of any accidents that children have at the setting and any medication administered to children. All written parental permissions are in place. Attendance records for children, staff and visitors are clearly recorded. Since the last inspection changes to the lunchtime routine mean that children are kept safe and calm when parents collect and leave their children.

Resources are used effectively to help children learn and develop. Children are given plenty of choice from the variety of resources available. Through sensitive observations and assessments, staff plan a suitable range of activities that take account of children's individual needs, interests and next steps for learning. As a result all areas of learning are covered through a balanced range of adult-led and child-led activities, which includes outside play. There are currently no children who attend that have English as an additional language or special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, staff are able to demonstrate a suitable awareness about how they would offer support should such children start to attend. Partnerships with parents are developing well. Information is shared regularly with parents and carers, both verbally and in writing. Parents and carers are encouraged to look at children's learning journals when they leave their children at the setting. Children proudly show off their work to their parents when they look at their learning journal. Parents receive regular newsletters and staff encourage them to attend parent meetings. The group's policies and procedures are easily accessible to them. All parents spoken to know their child's key person. Parents comment on how pleased they are with the activities offered, the caring staff and how happy their children are. Partnerships with other early years settings are in their infancy. Systems for sharing information have not been fully developed. Basic information to support children's care is shared but details of the child's learning and development are not regularly shared between the settings.

Staff have made considerable progress and changes since the last inspection. They have put in place a detailed action plan that addresses both their weaknesses and how they have met the actions identified at the last inspection. As a result, the staff now work more effectively and meet children's individual needs. Staff demonstrate a drive to improve and develop their practice. They have changed routines and planning of activities and there is evidence of a beneficial impact on

children's welfare, learning and development.

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

Children enter the setting and leave their parents happily. They are greeted by the staff and each other as they arrive. Children understand the routines and confidently hang up their coats, find their names to self-register and start to play. Children are active learners and make satisfactory progress in communication, literacy, numeracy and technology. For example, children enjoy using the computer and confidently use the controls and key board to play the games. Children are beginning to learn about co-operation skills and how to negotiate with each other. Staff help children learn about taking turns by using egg timers, so children know when it is time to pass the toy to another child or that it is tidy up time. This works well even though in the early stages of being used. Children are able to make some choices about their learning and show an interest, asking questions about things around them. For example, children use magnets around the setting, testing what they can and cannot stick to. Staff respond well and clearly to children's questions about the magnets and how they work. Children enjoy taking part in a 'wake and shake', physical play session, but staff do not move the furniture appropriately so children are not able to move around freely.

Older children help the younger children in the setting if they are struggling to get on tricycles, wash their hands or put on their coats, showing care and concern for others. Children have a sense of security and confidence within the setting due to generally good interaction with the staff. Outings taken in the local community help children understand about the society in which they live and the wider world. Children have a strong sense of belonging and are generally well behaved. Staff manage children's behaviour appropriately and encourage children's self-esteem. This is promoted through the use of 'Wow' vouchers by staff. Children are given these for achieving a milestone. These are put on the board by staff and children take great delight in showing their parents when they get one. Staff provide a secure environment which reflects the children's backgrounds and some sections of the wider community.

Children are beginning to understand about healthy lifestyles. They have lovely opportunities to explore the outside area where they are able to ride tricycles, dig in the small flower bed, chalk on the large chalk board and build towers with large bricks. For example, a group of children have a great time as they work together to build a castle with bricks and put straw on for the roof. Staff deployment at snack times occasionally means that staff are busy organising hand washing and preparing snacks and they are not always able to supervise children adequately. This means that younger children are able to climb on chairs and touch the plates, cups and jugs of water and milk. However, when all children are sitting down and having their snacks they sit well and chat happily with the staff and each other. Children are encouraged to pour their own drinks, help give out the cups and plates to their friends, which gives them independence and self-help skills. Overall,

children's health, physical and dietary needs are adequately met.

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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