

# St Christopher's Playgroup (Warden Hill)

Inspection report for early years provision

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| <b>Unique reference number</b> | EY340735  |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 09/05/2012  |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Rachel Edwards  |
| <b>Setting address</b>         | Warden Hill Primary School, Durham Close, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL51 3DF |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 07914 740022  |
| <b>Email</b>                   |   |
| <b>Type of setting</b>         | 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 Christopher's Playgroup (Warden Hill)

was registered at this site in 2006. It operates on one day a week from a classroom within Warden Hill School in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The playgroup has the use of some areas within the school and access to all outside play areas. For the rest of the week, the playgroup operates from the church hall in Warden Hill. It is under a separate registration but is managed by the same committee and with the same staff team. The playgroup is open at this site, from 9.15am until 11.45am on Wednesdays during term time only.

The group is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 24 children from three years old to the end of the early years age range, at any one time. There are currently 24 children on roll. The playgroup provides funded early years education for three- and four-year olds. It supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and some who are learning English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and two are working towards qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children enjoy attending this stimulating playgroup for one day each week, where they are safe and well cared for. They benefit from excellent links with the host school, which help children make a smooth transition into formal education. Staff are skilled and the good quality teaching helps all children progress very well overall. Staff work closely with parents to ensure children's individual needs are generally well catered for. Staff are highly reflective and use effective methods to monitor what they provide. They value support from outside professionals, regularly attend training and have been successful in making and sustaining improvements.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- help children learn to respect and value themselves and others further, by celebrating cultural differences within the play group as well as the wider community
- enhance children's learning in all areas by making greater use of the outdoor play spaces, and enable those children who would benefit, longer periods of outdoor play.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff follow clear policies, strategies and procedures to promote children's safety and well-being. Robust recruitment, checking and induction procedures ensure staff's suitability to work with children. All staff undertake child protection training, including the play leader at a higher level. This means they can respond promptly and appropriately should they have concerns for a child's welfare. Children demonstrate an excellent awareness of safety issues and understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Their behaviour is exemplary.

The playgroup has an extremely positive relationship with parents and carers. This means staff know the children and their families very well. However, they do not always reflect the different cultural backgrounds of children within the group, to help them understand and value diversity. Parents are heavily involved in decision making, for example, by serving on the committee and they help evaluate the provision by contributing their ideas. Staff keep them fully informed through informal discussions, termly meetings and free access to their child's 'learning journey' record of achievement. These are well illustrated with photographs and examples of their child's work. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning, for example, by celebrating achievements from home with 'wow slips' and comments in their record books. This helps build a complete picture of children's progress. Parents speak very highly of the group. They value the caring and skilled staff and feel their children benefit enormously from the close links with the primary school.

Partnerships with the host school are exceptionally strong and a real strength of the playgroup. Small groups of children visit the reception classes for a short time each session. A playgroup member of staff, who helps them settle and become familiar with the 'big school' environment and routines, accompanies them. A small number of children move on to various other primary schools and playgroup staff form effective links with these. There are strong partnerships with outside agencies to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. Staff offer a high level of support to these children, to make sure they are fully included and achieve as well as they can.

The playgroup has very limited storage at this setting, and so relies on staff bringing resources from their other group nearby and setting up each session. They manage well to accommodate children's interests. However, limited access to the full range of resources sometimes restricts children's ability to develop fully their play. The children have use of the host school's extensive and extremely well resourced outdoor play areas. These provide wonderful experiences for the children, for example, to hunt for frogs and other mini beasts in the natural area. However, they generally only use the outdoor areas for a limited period each session. Some children, especially those who learn better outside, would benefit from making greater use of the outdoor areas.

The preschool is well led and managed by the enthusiastic and conscientious play leader. Staff work extremely well as a team and are motivated to improve further. They meet regularly to discuss children's progress, planning and areas for improvement. They use effective methods of self-evaluation, which include the views of parents, children and other professionals. Plans are well targeted to benefit the children, for example, they are exploring the possibility of having their own outdoor space that children could freely access.

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

Each child builds a close bond with its key member of staff. They feel happy and secure and so are confident to explore and try new things. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because activities are well planned and organised. Staff encourage the children's independence to choose what they want to do and then discretely and skilfully guide their learning, without dominating their play.

Staff place a very strong emphasis on developing children's listening, communication and speaking skills. Like the host school, they follow the 'Letters and Sounds' programme, providing a consistent approach as they transfer to reception. Staff communicate with the children in various ways, which helps all children, but especially those with language difficulties or those learning English as an additional language. Staff routinely use Makaton signing and picture prompts to reinforce messages. Children become fluent speakers because there is so much to talk about. For example, two children become engrossed as they build a 'bigger and bigger' mountain from chocolate dough. They talk excitedly, using their imaginations, as they build 'I'm climbing to the top- look I can see my house'. Another painstakingly makes a flower and thinks about how to wrap up her present 'for Daddy'. She folds paper round it and decides she needs tape to stick her parcel. Children are inventive and use their growing knowledge to solve simple problems as they play. They use their developing skills well, for example, writing their name, unaided, on a picture.

Children behave extremely well and with maturity. They are kind towards one another and share very well, for example, using a sand timer to decide turns on the computer. Staff praise them frequently to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children enjoy taking on small responsibilities, such as leading a group to wash hands before snack. They decide what the group will be; perhaps bats, or trucks and all follow the leader, moving in different ways. Staff take every opportunity to help children learn. For example, children discuss the different shapes of crisps at snack time.

Children develop a very good understanding of keeping healthy. They bring in their own snacks and staff talk with them about healthy options. Staff give parents guidance about healthy foods to include. Children know they must wash their hands before eating as 'dirty germs make you ill'. They notice how exercise affects their bodies and they know they must take a big breath before a vigorous action song. They develop good control over their bodies, using a wide range of large and

small equipment both inside and outdoors. There is plenty of room to run and chase outdoors and children enthusiastically shed shoes and socks to dig in the satisfyingly deep sandpit.

Children learn to use equipment safely, for example, carefully using scissors to cut dough, which also strengthens their hands ready for writing. They are becoming very aware of safety issues, for example, warning that if you eat play dough, 'you will be sick and have to go to hospital'. They find out about the world around them through visits to local places, such as the church for Remembrance Day, a farm park and using the soft play area at a special school, where they meet children with different abilities. All these factors mean children are acquiring the skills that will help them continue to progress well in their future learning.

## 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

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| <b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b> | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement                                     | 2 |

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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|--|---|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>            | 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  | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships  | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers                                | 1 |

### The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|--|---|
| 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

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| <b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b> | 2 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning    | 2 |
| The extent to which children feel safe                           | 1 |
| 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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