

Holy Apostles Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sheila Boyle

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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

Holy Apostles Playgroup operates from a former cricket pavilion sited at the rear of Holy Apostles Primary School on Battledown Approach, Cheltenham. The pavilion stands close to the school playing field which is used by the group for outdoor play. The provision was registered in 1994. The accommodation consists of three large rooms and washrooms for children and staff. Access to the provision is restricted for disabled persons. The playgroup is run by a management committee made up from elected parents and representatives from the Holy Apostles School and the Holy Apostles Church. The playgroup serves the local communities of Battledown, Whaddon and Charlton Kings. The provision is open from 9am to 3pm on Monday, Tuesday and Friday and from 9am until midday on Wednesday and Thursday during term time. A maximum of 24 children aged from two to five years may attend at any one time. It is their policy to accept children in the term in which they become three. Currently there are 41 children aged from two to five years on roll who attend various sessions throughout the week. Of these 38 children aged three to four years receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and welcomes children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs six staff, five of whom including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The club is registered with Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. The group receives support from the local authority's consultant for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Holy Apostles Playgroup is a stimulating, and safe setting where children are fully supported and their individual needs met. Children enjoy themselves and make excellent progress in their learning and development as a result of the wide range of experiences and activities provided for them. The setting has strong links with parents and their views are sought regularly, although not yet reflected in the setting's plans for development. Self-evaluation is highly effective and capacity for future improvement is excellent.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- take greater account of parents' views when planning for the future development of the provision.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The leadership and management are outstanding. Those in charge give excellent attention to safeguarding children as well as providing them with enjoyable learning experiences when they attend the provision. Suitable policies and procedures for keeping children safe, including child protection procedures, are implemented extremely rigorously by staff. The vetting of all adults working in the pre-school provision is exceptionally thorough and there are regular checks of the equipment and the areas where children play and learn. Staff are well trained in first-aid procedures and suitable equipment is stored in a convenient location. Regular fire drills are undertaken.

Effective relationships and systems of communication with parents, including electronic communication, help children make a smooth transition from home to the playgroup. The good links are evident from the way that parents and staff communicate at daily handovers, their involvement in their children's learning and in their good attendance at parents' evenings. Although leaders seek parents' views regularly, they do not yet take full account of these when devising their for the future development of the provision.

Highly effective links with outside agencies, including the local children's centre, ensure children with speech and communicational difficulties are supported very well. A strong partnership with the school's Early Years class, through the sharing of excellent outdoor resources, contributes greatly to children's personal and social development and their self-esteem. Regular visits to the reception class at story time and visits from other schools' Reception teachers prior to their transfer ensure children are exceptionally well prepared for moving to the next stage of learning.

All staff have completed training on the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. As a result, their planning takes very good account of the children's needs and interests as well as the areas of learning for their age group.

Equality for all children and promotion of diversity lie at the heart of this successful setting and are given extremely high priority. Staff make highly effective use of the excellent range of resources to support children's learning, including the physical activities area and the outdoor classroom in the school's grounds. The setting's leader has high aspirations for the provision and is fully committed to a programme of continuous improvement through rigorous self-review and evaluation in consultation with staff. Recommendations from the previous report have been fully implemented, demonstrating the setting's outstanding capacity for further improvement.

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

Children enjoy learning because they are provided with a rich and stimulating environment, together with a wide range of interesting and challenging activities, both indoors and outdoors, which reflect their age and interests. As a result, all children quickly learn new vocabulary and grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Children confidently use the outdoor climbing facilities and mobile toys to develop their physical skills as well as coordination and social skills. These are developed further through regular visits to the physical activity area in the school grounds. At circle time, children persevere for long periods, often listening to a story and speaking to staff. They sometimes create their own stories and sequence events using a wide variety of stimulating resources. An example of this is their work on 'The Great Goat Chase'. Through ample opportunities for child-initiated play, they develop their language and social skills as well as their skills of investigation and enquiry. Children explore different materials in their environment, for example when using the outdoor classroom in the school's grounds, where they develop an excellent understanding and knowledge of pond life, wild flowers and mini beasts.

There are many examples of children's high quality creative work displayed on walls and included in their 'learning journey' records, including their work on Noah's Ark. Several of the parents from non-British backgrounds help children gain a deeper understanding of some European and Asian cultures.

Children develop their literacy and number skills extremely well in carefully planned, focused sessions and through self-initiated play. Some sort objects by colour and size. Older children order numbers to 10 correctly on a number line. The more able children link sounds and letters competently and some can write their name. The younger children's language and counting skills are developed most successfully through singing nursery rhymes.

Children demonstrate their independence by helping themselves to drinks from the tray and finding their named place on the table at snack time. They make healthy choices at snack times, mostly choosing portions of fruit. Children quickly learn the daily routines and demonstrate an excellent awareness of health and hygiene by washing their hands after using the toilet and before meals. They are very happy, feel very secure and show affection and respect for staff by listening to them, behaving well and following instructions. Children are becoming increasingly confident in showing initiative and learning to make choices.

Children quickly learn to tolerate and respect their peers and support others. They help to raise money for charity and learn about important events in their lives, including christenings and birthdays, as well as religious and cultural festivals and sporting events, such as the Olympic Games. Children learn a great deal from visitors, such as representatives from the emergency services and an Olympic medalist. Children's excellent personal and social development and their acquisition of communication, literacy and numeracy skills prepares them exceptionally well for the next steps in their 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

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	1

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	1
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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