

St Michaels Playgroup

St Michaels Playgroup, Roding Road, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3EJ

Inspection date

23/10/2012

Previous inspection date

17/11/2011

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

3

Previous inspection:

3

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 3

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children 2

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision 3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is satisfactory

- Children with additional needs are well supported in the setting as their key person liaises with other professionals, such as the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator, speech therapist and occupational therapist, to develop individual education plans which are used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning and development.
- The effectiveness of the key person system helps children to form secure attachments from the beginning that gives them confidence and enhances their self-esteem.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure the professional development of all staff on a regular basis.

It is not yet good because

- Staff cannot easily identify children's next steps as individual plans are not clearly linked to observation and assessment.
- Although self-evaluation takes into account the views of staff, parents and other professionals, it is not robust enough to enable an effective action plan for improvements to be made.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are scheduled:

- at least once in every inspection cycle. The current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged as inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage; or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised for inspection where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The provision is also registered on the voluntary and compulsory parts of the Childcare Register. This report includes a judgment about compliance with the requirements of that register.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in the playroom and the outside garden area.
- The inspector spoke with both managers and all staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector took account of parents' views by speaking to them on the day.
- The inspector looked at children's learning journals, planning sheets, staff files and other relevant documentation.

Inspector

Jenny Forbes

Full Report

Information about 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 44 children aged from two to under five years on roll and the playgroup receives early education funding for two-, three- and four-year-olds. Of these, 35 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area.

The playgroup currently supports 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 five staff. All of the staff, including both managers, hold, or are working towards, appropriate early years qualifications, to at least level three and above. The setting receives support from the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- ensure that the seven areas of learning shape the educational programme and develop staff's knowledge and understanding further, so that the observations and assessments undertaken on children accurately identify the next steps in children's learning and development.

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- develop the process for reflection and self-evaluation to include an assessment of the quality of practice and use this to set further targets for improvement.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

The staff have appropriate knowledge of the learning and development requirements and use the guidance document, Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage to track children's development. This is shared and discussed regularly with the parents to ensure they are fully involved in their children's learning. The children's learning journals include observation notes, samples of children's work and photographs of children engaging in activities and experiences; however, these observations and assessments are not used to identify the next steps in children's learning, so that children can make the best possible progress.

There is a balance of child-initiated and adult-led play experiences, which encourage children to be active learners and children are able to move freely between activities of their choice. Open access to the book corner and regular story times promote children's language development and children respond with enthusiasm, when sharing books and

listening to stories. All resources are age and stage appropriate and meet the needs of the range of children who attend the setting.

Children with additional needs are well supported in the setting as their key person liaises with other professionals, such as the area Special Educational Needs Coordinator, speech therapist and occupational therapist, to develop individual education plans.

Children are friendly and confident and have the attention of an adult at all times. Children are encouraged to be independent as they use the toilet and wash their hands and at snack time are able to feed themselves. All activities are well supervised and those who are younger or less able are offered and given assistance. Children are treated as individuals, according to their own individual needs, with kindness and respect and this is reflected in the way that children behave towards each other. Staff offer sensitive support to children who have English as an additional language and adapt means of communication to ensure parents are kept well informed. Parents are invited to contribute to the children's learning and development by providing resources from home, which enhance the delivery of the educational programmes.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

The key person system helps children form secure attachments and promotes their well-being and independence. Children enjoy the structure of the setting as they are becoming familiar with what is expected of them at certain times of the day and consequently, develop a sense of belonging and security. For example, children know that when they are asked to show their hands, they must stop what they are doing and join another exciting activity, such as story or garden time. Children are learning to recognise their own names as they select name labels to post into a pillar box on entry to the setting, promoting early literacy. Practitioners are friendly and approachable and work in close partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's needs are met. Children are well-behaved in the setting and the praise and encouragement they receive from staff help children to feel settled. There is a private area for nappy changing, which is carried out hygienically and quickly by a caring staff member.

Children are provided with a range of fresh fruit, cheese, crackers and bread sticks for snack time that promotes their health. Staff ensure that all children's health and medical needs are fully supported, through the clear policies and procedures for recognition and management of allergies and food intolerances.

Children are taken outside regularly for fresh air and exercise, they are appropriately dressed for the weather and are free to explore the variety of activities and equipment available for them. For example, children enjoy playing with sand as they pour and scoop and recall trips to the seaside, prompted by open ended questioning by a staff member who crouches to child level. Children enjoy looking at books, listening to stories and singing rhymes. This promotes their interest in literacy and supports their early reading skills. Staff ask the children open ended questions and give them instructions to follow, promoting children's thinking skills. For example, a staff member shows cards to a group of children, asking each child by name to identify a colour, shape or picture.

Clear risk assessment procedures are followed every morning to ensure the setting is safe and the children are protected from any potential dangers. When children leave the setting they are fully supported by the effective system for transition, developed with the local school. For example, children are invited to enjoy activities and events at the school to help them become familiar with the environment and ensure their readiness for school.

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

The management team ensures that each child is allocated a key person, from the time of admission, so that children can form secure attachments. If a child shows a preference for another member of staff, a change of key person can happen early on enabling the child to settle quickly. There are two managers and a deputy to ensure that there is always a senior member of staff available at all times. Regular staff meetings are held, where best practice is shared and discussed. A suitable programme of performance appraisals for staff is in place. A self-evaluation form was completed a year ago, however, further evidence of self-evaluation or action plans is currently limited. This results in some inconsistencies in the delivery of the educational programmes.

Children are effectively safeguarded. The staff recruitment procedures are appropriately robust, which help ensure that staff are suitable to work with the children. A well-organised range of security measures, risk assessments and policy documents is in place to ensure that children are protected from harm. Security of the premises is a high priority and staff create an environment that is safe and welcoming, where children feel secure and happy. There is a designated member of staff who is responsible for overseeing safeguarding; as a result training courses in child protection, for all staff, have been given priority for the spring term.

Partnership working with parents is effective and parents are kept fully informed about their child's learning and development through daily interaction. Parents have been asked for feedback to help the setting make continuous improvements to their practice to benefit the children. Parents interviewed expressed their confidence in the setting with regard to their children's development and how quickly they settle in.

Systems to help children and families with English as an additional language are effective and families are well supported by the setting. For example, parents are asked for key words in their home language to help children feel at ease and they are asked to supply costumes and artefacts to give authenticity to their celebration of festivals.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met
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What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY361446
Local authority	Essex

Inspection number	821027
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	44
Name of provider	St Michaels Playgroup
Date of previous inspection	17/11/2011
Telephone number	07850362336

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises that are usually their own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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