

St Mary's Playgroup (Cheltenham)

Brotherhood Hall, Lyefield Road East, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 8AU

Inspection date

07/05/2013

Previous inspection date

31/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

2

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend 2

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 2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- Strong partnerships with parents ensure that they are fully informed about their child's care and learning and are able to make a positive contribution to the running of the playgroup.
- Children benefit from consistency and cope well during times of change because staff support children to move successfully on to other settings or school.
- Children make good progress in their learning because activities are well planned to capture children's interest and meet their individual needs.
- Children are happy and confident at the playgroup because staff work hard to develop trusting relationships and give a high priority to promoting children's well-being.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The range of cultures represented in the playgroup is not reflected in books, labelling and signs.

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
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged 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 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
- scheduled 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 reviewed a range of documentation including children's progress records and the playgroup's self-evaluation document.
- The inspector observed practice and staff interactions with children both inside and outside.
- The inspector held discussions with parents, staff, the manager and children.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager.

Inspector

Ruth Tharme

Full Report

Information about the setting

St Mary's Playgroup is a community run group established in 1966. It operates from a village hall next to an infant school in Charlton Kings, a residential area to the south of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The group has strong links with the school. There is a fully enclosed play area available for outdoor play.

There are currently 56 children attending who are within the early years age range. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for children aged three and four years. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The playgroup opens five days a week from 9am until 3pm, term time only. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup has procedures to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and supports children who speak English as an additional language. The building is accessed via a short ramp.

The playgroup employs six members of child care staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- raise children's awareness of different scripts, matched to languages spoken by families in the playgroup, for example, by providing posters and signs and dual language books and reading them to the children.

Inspection judgements

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

Children receive good quality and consistent care from dedicated staff. This means that they are happy and settled at the playgroup. They make good progress in all areas of their learning and development and are actively gaining the skills they need for the next steps in their learning.

Staff regularly observe children and monitor their achievements to plan effectively for the next steps in children's learning. They gather information from parents, when children join the playgroup, so that they have a good understanding of children's care needs and current level of attainment. This helps key workers to plan effectively from the outset. For example, they greet new children with an activity, and resources they know they will enjoy, and welcome them in their home language wherever possible.

Staff carry out careful ongoing assessments and consultations with parents, about their child's progress at home, so that they can target their planning effectively. For example, children lacking in confidence when they join the playgroup are supported to make friends and build their self-esteem. Key workers maintain accurate records, in individual learning journals, so that they can demonstrate children's good progress towards the early learning goals and share clear information with parents. Key workers complete the progress check for children aged two years and share this with parents at individual meetings.

Staff promote children's learning effectively. For example, they ask questions that encourage children to think and then ensure that children are given sufficient time to respond. This gives children the confidence to solve problems and to express themselves well. They happily engage in conversation with adults and other children, discussing their activities and plans for the day. A well organised circle time takes place early in the session. This provides children with a good opportunity to practice their mathematical skills, counting how many children are present and adding one more if someone else arrives.

Staff provide a supportive environment and encourage children to form warm and caring friendships. Children play cooperatively together and readily take turns. For example, they queue patiently at the garden tap to fill their watering cans. They enjoy spending time together in a group as they chat with one another at snack time. They talk freely to adults, discussing their activities or making their needs known.

Children's physical skills are developing well as they enjoy using a range of tools, such as rollers and cutters, with their play dough. They are developing a good understanding of the impact of exercise on their bodies exclaiming 'I need a drink because I've been outside!' They run skilfully and negotiate their way carefully around the garden.

The playgroup's allotment provides an excellent opportunity for children to learn about their environment. For example, they dig the ground, adding compost they have made from their organic food waste, before planting and growing a range of fruit and vegetables. Children eat what they have grown or use it in their cooking activities. Consequently they gain a good understanding of aspects of the natural world.

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

Children are happy, settled and content while at the playgroup. They develop very strong attachments to staff members. This gives them confidence to leave their parents and settle quickly to their activities. Children quickly become familiar with the daily routine, which helps them to feel secure. As a consequence, they show high levels of confidence and self-esteem and are motivated to learn.

Children behave well because adults have high expectations and act as positive role models. They provide children with clear explanations to help them to manage their own behaviour. For example 'Please don't run inside, because you might bump into something

or fall over.'

The playgroup is well resourced with a good selection of toys and materials that promote children's learning and development. However, the different cultures represented in the playgroup are not reflected in books, labelling and signs. This means children do not learn about different forms of writing or see print that they are familiar with at home.

Activities and resources are well presented so that children can easily help themselves and make their own choices. For example, children draw, design and make for their own creations using resources from the well-stocked craft area. Staff plan and arrange the outdoor area for maximum benefit to the children. There is space for physical activity as well as the outdoor classroom area. The allotment is particularly appealing and children enjoy planting and tending their own fruit and vegetables.

Staff members support children to develop a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles. They provide parents with information on what to include in packed lunches and talk to children about making healthy food choices at snack time. There are daily opportunities for physical activity both in and out-of-doors. For example children enjoy spending time in the garden or taking part in active music sessions where they dance and move in rhythm.

Children learn to manage risk and to keep themselves safe as they carefully climb the steps to the slide or negotiate the garden steps while carrying a heavy watering can. Children's independence is growing as they are encouraged to manage their own personal hygiene and to pour their own drinks when they are thirsty. These skills positively prepare children for their move to school and the next stages in their learning.

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

The playgroup team have a good understanding of the safeguarding and welfare requirements. Staff members routinely attend child protection training and are well informed about the playgroup's policy and the action to take if they are concerned about a child in their care. They are rigorous when it comes to safety matters, taking appropriate steps to maintain security and implement a robust risk assessment programme. Hygiene standards are good as adults follow well-established cleaning routines, for example, they clean the floor immediately when children drop food during meal times.

A very good understanding of the learning and development requirements means that adults plan effectively to meet children's needs and encourage good progress. The staff team are encouraged to keep their skills and knowledge up to date through access to training, annual appraisals and regular monitoring and supervision. As a result, they are dedicated and very enthusiastic about their roles.

The staff team, parents and children contribute to the evaluation of the quality of the provision, which means staff are able to clearly identify strengths and areas for

improvement. This results in a clear plan of action that is well targeted to bring about improvement in the outcomes for children. For example, there are plans to further develop the outdoor area to provide experiences similar to those in forest schools.

Parents speak highly about the playgroup. They value and enjoy their involvement and make a positive contribution to the running of the playgroup. For example, they take turns to help out at sessions and spend weekends clearing overgrown areas of the garden so that children can make better use of outdoor space. Parents are kept up to date with playgroup events through the informative website, newsletters and flyers. Parents have regular contact with key workers and involvement with the assessment process so that they know about the progress their children are making.

The playgroup has very strong links with other settings the children attend. They share information about children's progress and care needs to ensure consistency. The links staff develop with local schools actively support children through the move to the next stage of their learning. Reception teachers visit the playgroup and children are taken to visit the school, attending shows and events presented by pupils. Connections with health and social services help to effectively support children with particular needs.

The Childcare Register

The requirements for the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are	Met
The requirements for the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are	Met

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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 action. 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	101598
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	845831
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 8
Total number of places	27
Number of children on roll	56
Name of provider	St Mary's Playgroup (Cheltenham) Committee
Date of previous inspection	31/03/2009
Telephone number	01242 260080

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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, which are usually the childminder's 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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