

St Matthews Playgroup

Church Hall, Church Road, Cainscross, Stroud, Glos, GL5 4LH

Inspection date

02/12/2013

Previous inspection date

26/03/2009

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This inspection:

2

Previous inspection:

3

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

- Partnership with parents is strong. Staff liaise very well with them and other professionals to support children's learning and development to ensure they are well prepared for the future.
- Staff have a good awareness of children's safety, and help children develop their understanding of keeping safe. This means children can confidently move around the environment and initiate their own play choices.
- Staff monitor and adapt activities to match individual children's needs to support their learning well.
- Staff provide interesting and challenging experiences for all children. Therefore, children are making good progress in their learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There are few resources to promote children's further awareness of the natural world and staff miss opportunities to talk to children about living things and how they grow.
- Parents and carers are not currently fully involved in the evaluation process.

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.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed a range of activities in the one main play area and outside area.
- The inspector held discussions with the playgroup manager, staff and children.
- The inspector spoke to and took account of the parents views.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector viewed children's records including samples of their work.

Inspector

Deborah Sanders

Full report

Information about the setting

St Matthews Playgroup operates from St Matthews Church hall, which is to the west of Stroud town centre in Gloucestershire. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. It is managed by a committee of parents. The group uses the main hall, entrance hall, kitchen and toilets. They have use of a grassed area, and hard standing and path, which is part of the church grounds with a small garden patch available for planting. Victory Park playing fields and play park are close by and regularly used by the group. The church hall has disabled access and toilet facilities.

There are currently 44 children on roll in the early years age group. The playgroup receives funding for free early years education for two- three- and four-year-old children. The group operates Monday to Friday, term-time only on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9am until 12 noon, and Monday and Thursday from 9am to 3pm, and Friday from 12 noon to 3pm. The playgroup supports a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who speak English is an additional language. The playgroup employs seven staff, all of whom hold a level 3 qualification. One person is also working towards a level 5 qualification.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- enhance resources that encourage children to learn about animal life cycles and how things grow to raise their further understanding of the world.

Inspection judgements

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

Children settle well in this welcoming environment, where a dedicated group of staff supports them effectively. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn and develop, and positively encourage and motivate them by showing praise and enthusiasm. They provide a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that effectively consider the children's individual stages of development. Children are involved in small and large group activities, and these are a regular featured in the planning of activities. Therefore, children make secure bonds with their friends and are making good progress.

Staff gather good information from parents and complete observations when children begin at playgroup. They use this to identify children's interests and capabilities accurately so they can plan suitable and challenging activities, and establish children's individual needs securely. They observe children to find out their immediate interests in order to plan activities that will capture their imaginations and enhance their learning. Staff take

photographs of the children engrossed in their play and present them to parents in their individual learning journeys. Methods used for observing and assessing children's next steps or areas where they need additional support are effective.

There are good strategies for supporting children who speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, staff provide each child with their own word and picture book so that they can share these with parents at home. Therefore, children and their families feel supported and valued. Parents can come into playgroup at any time, which enables them to find out information about their child's learning. In addition, it provides a time for staff to build relationships with children and their parents. Parents are actively involved in termly assessments. Children have individual targets and parents are encouraged to review these targets with their child's key person. This contributes to consistent support at home and at the playgroup. These help identify any gaps in children's achievements and enable children to be fully supported. As a result, children are ready for the transition to school or the next terms learning goals.

Children are involved in a wide range of meaningful activities to develop their communication and language skills. They are able to recognise a range of letters and the sounds as staff provide activities that keep them involved and interested. For instance, staff say 'do you have a red hooded top, stripy tights and pig tails?'. The children look at what they are wearing and can eliminate themselves. Staff are teaching children to listen carefully and respond to what they see and hear. Children explore and develop their own ideas as staff know when to stand back, introduce resources when needed and wait to be invited into children's play. They are careful not to interrupt the flow of children's conversations but join in appropriately. Staff encourage children to try out new experiences, such as tasting different foods, using a knife to cut up real vegetables. Staff monitor children's play and are able to adapt activities to suit their growing inquisitiveness, for example, a member of staff becomes a patient so the children can make her better, they are gentle and caring as they cover her in a blanket and make dinner for her.

Children are encouraged to problem solve as staff will say 'I don't know how to do this, can you help me?'. Staff set up interesting activities to stretch children's questioning and listen carefully so that they can respond to what a child wants to do next, and plan further activities linked to what they enjoy doing. Children enjoy the opportunity to show their creative skills as they stick a range of coloured papers and glitter to create their own designs. Children work together well, sharing the resources as they pass each other the glue and share the glitter pots. Staff teach children to be independent learners and to create their own designs.

Children develop good mathematical skills. They are learning to identify different objects and match them up. Staff provide interesting games to teach children how to count everyday objects. Children have some good opportunities to find out about the world around them, such as topics looking at the weather and the effect the different seasons have on the natural environment. However, there are few resources provided to encourage children to discuss how animals and plant grow. Consequently, there is little opportunity to develop their understanding of growth, decay and changes over time.

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

Staff are warm and caring and have strong bonds with the children. As key persons, they help children to settle easily on arrival and show empathy to children who have difficulties in separating from their parents. Parents can stay for as long as they like. Therefore, children settle quickly and enjoy the rest of the session, demonstrating they feel safe and secure. Children behave very well, they are good listeners and staff have secure processes in place for handling children's behaviour. This supports the children effectively, and promotes their self-esteem through regular use of praise for a job well done. For example, staff praise children for taking turns, putting on their coats and listening to instructions. Children take part in the daily risk assessment of the playgroup, each day two children accompany a member of staff and they complete the daily safety checks. Consequently, this enables children to identify potential hazards and learn how to minimise risks.

There are good arrangements in place as children prepare to move onto school. Staff support individual children's needs, and as part of their preparation the playgroup provides extended days where children get used to staying for a full day and have a packed lunch. They also have regular visits to the local school during playtime. As a result, children are happy, confident, feel secure, and are ready for the move to school.

Children are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles well; they spend regular time outside in most weathers. They have free flow between the indoor and outside area, which is staffed extremely well, and children understand the clear boundaries, as the outside space is not enclosed. Children have the opportunity to use a range of play equipment as well as regular walks in the local park. They know the importance of good health and physical exercise as they talk about being too hot or feeling cold. They put on their own coats with little assistance from staff, and they talk to staff about blowing their nose and putting the tissue in the bin to prevent germs spreading. Staff help children to become independent and encourage them to manage their own personal needs, children show a good level of independence relative to their age. Parents work closely with the staff to ensure children have nutritious foods, such as fruit and fresh produce in their packed lunches. Children confidently talk about what foods are healthy, and how fruit and vegetables are good for you.

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

The manager and the chairperson of the committee have a secure knowledge of the requirements of the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The chairperson oversees the running of the playgroup, and takes responsibility for yearly appraisals for all staff. All staff receive regular weekly supervision from the manager, who takes an active part in directly caring for the children. Consequently, she is able to identify where staff need support and identifies training in specific areas to develop staff practice further. All staff have completed safeguarding, first aid, and basic food hygiene training, and the manager and the chair of the committee have completed safer recruitment

training. These support the staff and management in promoting children's well-being and welfare effectively.

Staff work very well together as a team. They have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and the policies and procedures are easily accessible to both staff and parents. All staff undertake required checks to ascertain their suitability to work with children. Designated staff have responsibility for checking the environment on a daily basis to make sure all areas are safe for children. Children are therefore, safe and protected from the risk of harm.

The manager and her staff are committed to ensuring the playgroup provides good quality childcare. As a result, they demonstrate a strong capacity to drive further improvements. In conjunction with the local authority advisor, they identify the strengths of the playgroup and areas for further improvement. Staff are fully involved in the self-evaluation process, and parents and children's feedback is welcomed. For example, parents can record comments in a book that is available at each session.

Good partnerships with parents and other providers involved in the care and education of the children supports a consistent approach to meeting their care and learning needs. For example, the playgroup has set up a 'communications' book to exchange information with other providers. Good arrangements are in place to work alongside other professionals, which results in a fully inclusive setting. Therefore, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included. The manager and staff understand their responsibilities to carry out progress checks for two-year-old children and share these with parents. This along with other summaries of children's achievements help monitor children's progress effectively, and enable staff to identify if children require any further support or challenge. Regular news bulletins keep parents fully informed about activities and a webpage enables parents to keep up to date with playgroup life.

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	Requires improvement	The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection.
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 monitored and inspected again within six 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	101674
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	816827
Type of provision	Sessional provision
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	2 - 5
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	44
Name of provider	St Matthews Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	26/03/2009
Telephone number	01453 756057

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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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