

St Michael's Playgroup

Church House, Mount Pleasant, LOUTH, Lincolnshire, LN11 9DR

Inspection date	09/12/2013
Previous inspection date	06/12/2012

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	3
	Previous inspection:	2
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		3
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		3

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision requires improvement

- Children behave very well in the playgroup. They share and take turns with each other and are learning to respect and care for one another. They cooperate together and this is a skill for life.
- Children's confidence, self-esteem and sense of belonging are well fostered by the staff who get to know each child well and form secure attachments with them.

It is not yet good because

- Partnerships with parents and carers have not been fully explored to ensure they are involved with all aspects of their children's care, learning and development.
- The manager has not had enough time to fully identify areas for improvement and implement robust systems of monitoring and evaluation and self-evaluation to ensure teaching practice is consistent.
- Children do not have sufficient opportunities to experience all areas of learning outside in order to enhance their progress and promote individual children's learning styles because staff do not enrich the outside learning environment.
- Children are not always able to develop their independence in everyday situations, such as, snack time and this limits their progress.

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 observed activities in the main playroom and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager and chairperson of the committee.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records, planning documentation and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children and the setting's improvement plan.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector interacted with children throughout the inspection.

Inspector

Clare Johnson

Full report

Information about the setting

St. Michael's Playgroup opened in 1986 and is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is run by a voluntary committee. It operates from one main room within St. Michael's Church House, which is located near the centre of the market town of Louth, Lincolnshire and serves the immediate locality as well as surrounding villages. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during term time. Sessions are from 9am until 12 noon and from 12.30pm until 3pm with a voluntary lunch club from 12 noon to 12.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There is an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 32 children on roll in the early years age range. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There are currently four members of staff working directly with children. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3, one holds an early years degree and the manager has Early Years Professional Status. The playgroup 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:

- involve parents in their children's learning by improving the exchange of information on entry and during the placement and encouraging them to share their views and enhance children's learning and development at home
- improve the quality of teaching to ensure all children make good progress from their starting points in every area of learning, by providing challenging activities that are fully matched to their learning needs and use information obtained from observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles.

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

- introduce effective systems of self-evaluation, supervision and performance management of staff to ensure all areas for improvement are identified and implemented and teaching practice is consistently effective and has a positive impact on children's learning and development
- provide children with regular opportunities to develop their independence through everyday situations, such as, snack time and pouring their own drinks
- improve the outside area to give children more opportunities to experience all areas of learning outside in order to enhance their progress, for example, by enriching the environment with visual images reflecting the prime and specific areas of learning.

Inspection judgements

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

Teaching is satisfactory. Children make generally good progress in their learning and development, however, variable teaching practice means they do not always make as much progress as they could. Staff plan a range of activities for them, which they enjoy and which cover all areas of learning. However, due to the inconsistencies in teaching practice children's learning is sometimes incidental rather than as a result of good quality teaching. Children are confident at playgroup. They make choices in their play and are allowed to be creative and spontaneous. Staff plan the activities based on their knowledge of children's interests, however, they are not always fully aware of children's stages of development as they do not have a robust system in place to track children's progress. This means that potentially children are not making as much progress as they could be, as staff do not gather good information about the children when they first start and so do not

have assessments to compare. Each child has a 'learning journey', which staff use to collect photographs and note observations of the children and these are shared with parents. These are sparsely completed and do not show a clear picture of children's progress over time. Parents are not fully involved in their children's learning. Staff do try hard and have made a wall frieze aimed at parents, which links the Early Years Foundation Stage to activities they can do with their children at home, however, this is not highly accessible to parents as it is on the back wall of the playgroup and they rarely see it. Parents can take their children's learning journeys home, however, they have limited opportunities to discuss the contents with staff and contribute to them effectively.

The characteristics of effective learning are evident most of the time in the playgroup. Children are confident to play, explore and have a go at new things. They are investigators and are keen to try new experiences. A small group of children become very interested in the inspector's identification badge. They have never seen one like it before and they ask many questions about how it works and why the string pulls out. They are inquisitive and tenacious in their exploration and these skills that they are acquiring support lifelong learning. Children are active learners. They concentrate and persevere at activities. For example, children enjoy an activity where they explore rice in the tuff spot. They use many different resources to explore the rice, such as, spoons, colanders, cups and their hands. Children are confident to leave the activity to find new resources from around the playgroup to bring to the play. They leave the activity and return to it as they wish and this consolidates their learning well. Staff support children's communication and language during this activity by asking them questions to make them think and introducing new words when they are exploring the rice. Children are critical thinkers as they are encouraged to develop their own ideas and strategies for doing things. They enjoy making birthday cakes from stickle bricks and are proud of their own designs and creations. They want to show the inspector their cakes and then go on to ask her when her birthday is and have a discussion about how old they are and when their birthdays are. They are making links between concepts and their learning is naturally extended.

Children are adequately prepared for school as they are generally experiencing a broad curriculum, which covers the prime and specific areas of learning, however, because staff do not always know where children are in relation to their starting points they are not always making as rapid progress as they could be. Children's individual learning styles are not fully catered for as the outside area has not been enriched by staff to reflect all areas of learning. This means that children who prefer to learn outside are not making as much progress as they could be, as the outside area is predominately used for fresh air and exercise. Children's creativity is fostered in this playgroup. They ask staff if they can sing them a song, which the staff have not heard of. Staff encourage them to do so and they enjoy performing their song in front of the group. Staff offer lots of praise and this boosts children's confidence and values their contributions. Children make good use of technology as they confidently use the playgroup's computer. They manipulate the mouse to select the program they would like and navigate the computer screen with ease. Children's early literacy skills are supported as they enjoy making marks, such as, drawing pictures of their family. Their development in mathematics is promoted, for example, they enjoy an activity where they draw numbers on baubles to decorate the Christmas tree. They recall the numbers and identify them when asked. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are appropriately supported in this playgroup because the designated special

educational needs coordinator has completed training and accesses support from the local authority to help her in her role.

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

Staff form close attachments with children because they spend time getting to know them well and an effective key person system is implemented. This fosters their sense of security and belonging in the playgroup. Children are self-assured and very confident in this playgroup. They feel at home in their environment and with the staff and confidently approach the inspector to inquire what her name is and why she is in their playgroup. Children know the routines and rules of the playgroup well and show respect to each other and staff. They behave very well in the playgroup and this has a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development. Children share and take turns and are supported by staff to sort out any disputes amongst themselves. They learn from staff who are good role models regarding behaviour as they encourage manners and kindness. As a result, children are learning to cooperate with each other and this is a skill for life. Children learn about taking risks when they are outside as they have to carefully balance when they are walking across the planks of wood to the tee-pee. Staff remind them of the risks as, due to the weather, the planks are slippery and children think carefully about what they need to consider to make sure they remain safe. By allowing children to take these managed risks, staff are supporting their understanding of keeping themselves safe.

Children are cared for well by the staff who prioritise their welfare. They are supported to develop their self-care skills, for example, when putting their coats on to go outside and when undressing while visiting the toilet. Children are provided with healthy snacks and drinks, such as, various fruits and milk. This supports their dietary health. They have daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the outdoor area and they enjoy this time to ride bikes and run around, which is supporting their physical development. However, children are not always encouraged to fully develop their independence. For example, in everyday situations like snack time, staff prepare the fruit and serve it to the children as well as pouring their drinks for them. These are missed opportunities to support children's independence skills and help to prepare them for school. In addition, children have to ask staff if they want a drink of water, which limits the opportunity for them to make independent decisions about their own needs in order to keep themselves hydrated.

Staff ensure children are well prepared for the transition between playgroup and school as they manage this transition well. They are part of a local cluster group who meet regularly to support transitions in the area. This group includes school teachers and other settings' staff. They all work together well and as a result, children are well supported. Staff get to know children's parents and carers well and communicate effectively regarding their care needs. The playgroup is small and has a real community feel where parents, staff and children all work together for the benefit of the playgroup. This has a positive impact on the children as their individual needs are well met by the staff because they have good relationships with parents.

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

This inspection was prioritised by Ofsted due to concerns raised about the security of the playgroup and the procedures for when children arrive and leave the setting. There is no evidence to suggest that children's safety and security have been compromised and the manager and staff are extremely vigilant when it comes to supervising children and following their safety procedures. As a result, children are safe in this playgroup and the risk assessment, combined with staffs' vigilance, keeps them safe. The manager and staff team are clear on their responsibilities regarding child protection and meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements. They know the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and what to do if they were worried a child was being abused. As a result, children are safeguarded. The playgroup has a good range of policies and procedures in place, which they use to underpin their practice.

Leadership and management requires improvement. The manager, staff team and committee work well together and have accurately identified many areas for improvement within the playgroup. However, not enough progress has been made in implementing the identified changes. The manager has yet to develop systems of supervision and appraisal of staff as well as monitoring and evaluation of their teaching practice and assessments of children. This has resulted in a lack of consistency in teaching practice and accurate assessment because the manager has limited opportunities to objectively observe staff and spend time with them tracking children's progress. Continuous professional development is prioritised by the manager and committee. Staff are encouraged to attend regular training courses based on their needs and the needs of the children. This is positive, however, the high level qualifications of the manager and staff team are not being fully realised and the impact on children's learning is not fully evident due to time constraints. Staff retention is good and the playgroup rarely need to recruit new staff. Staff work well as a team and support each other in their practice. The result is a harmonious working environment, which benefits children and adults.

The manager, staff and committee have a strong drive for improvement and have been frustrated by recent financial and time constraints, which they feel have hindered their progress. They strive to provide a good quality playgroup for the children and their families. The manager reflects on practice and identifies most areas for improvement, however, changes often take too long to materialise. Partnerships with parents and carers requires improvement. Parents are involved well when it comes to children's care and welfare. However, opportunities to be fully involved with supporting their children's progress at home are fewer. In addition, they are not actively consulted for their views and suggestions about how they feel improvements can be made to enhance the quality of learning their children receive. This was a recommendation at the last inspection and has yet to be implemented a year later. Partnerships with other agencies are good. The manager and staff work well with other local childcare providers, schools, social services and the local authority. Their positive attitude to working in partnership is benefitting the children.

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	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	509653
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	946099
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 17
Total number of places	18
Number of children on roll	32
Name of provider	St Michael's Playgroup of Louth Committee
Date of previous inspection	06/12/2012
Telephone number	07904 441359

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance '*Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted*', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

