

# St Marks & Hesters Way Playgroup

St. Marks & Hesters Way Playgroup, Community Centre, Brooklyn Road, CHELTENHAM, Gloucestershire, GL51 8DS

<b>Inspection date</b>	01/10/2014
Previous inspection date	16/01/2012

<b>The quality and standards of the early years provision</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	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

- Children are happy, settled, keen to learn and rapidly growing in self-assurance, because of strong relationships with the staff.
- There are good systems in place to observe, assess and plan for each child's next steps in learning. As a result, children make good progress in their learning and development.
- Partnerships with parents are strong, due to good systems for sharing knowledge through effective communication.
- Management and staff reflect well on their practice and quickly implement changes required to make improvements.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Routines limit the time children can spend outside, which does not fully benefit those who learn best outdoors.

## **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 children in all areas of the preschool.
- The inspector held discussions with the preschool play leader, staff and children.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.
- The inspector completed a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector reviewed paperwork including children's records, samples of their work, policies, risk assessments and suitability checks on staff.

## **Inspector**

Victoria Weir

## Full report

### Information about the setting

St Marks and Hesters Way Playgroup first opened in 1961 and is situated in a community centre to the north of Cheltenham town centre. The playgroup is managed by a committee of parents and is registered on the Early Years Register. It receives funding for the provision of free early education for children aged two, three and four year olds. The playgroup serves the local community and is open each weekday during school term times. Sessions operate either from 8.30am to 9.20am, 9.20am to 12.20pm, 12.30pm to 3.30pm or 9.20am to 3.30pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup has use of one main playroom, the hall and two other rooms at different times. There is an enclosed garden area. The playgroup committee employs seven staff members who work directly with the children. They all hold relevant qualifications. This includes two staff who hold relevant degree level qualifications and Early Years Professional Status.

### What the setting needs to do to improve further

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

- further develop the routine to enhance opportunities for children to play and pursue their interests outdoors.

### Inspection judgements

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

Children thrive in this vibrant preschool. They make good progress because staff plan activities and experiences closely linked to children's interests and learning needs. Staff gather appropriate information to accurately identify children's starting points. They liaise regularly with parents to make sure that they are up to date with children's changing interests and needs. They observe playing children closely to identify the learning that takes place and their learning styles. These observations are linked to children's ages and stages of development. As a result staff monitor children's progress and quickly identify and address any gaps in their learning. They are particularly skilled at using these observations to adapt activities so they are well suited to the children who are involved. For example, as children jumped on the steps a member of staff encouraged older children to jump two steps at a time and count in twos. This results in motivated children who experience challenge in their play. Parents receive good feedback from staff about their children's progress through daily discussions and regular reports. They state that staff are supportive in helping them to address any concerns about their children's development and offer suggestions to guide their children's learning at home.

The quality of teaching is good. Staff skilfully engage children in purposeful conversation. They ask questions or make comments that encourage children to express their thinking.

For example, children who found a snail shell in the garden talk and think with staff about where the snail may have gone. Staff know when to join in or direct children's play and when to leave them to develop their own ideas and find out things for themselves. This encourages the children to develop the attributes of effective learners as they become independent and creative. For example, children independently cooperated together to create mud pies for staff as they collected ingredients, counted and shared them. The staff team makes effective use of whole group activities to focus on specific skills. For example, children developed their listening and speaking skills during story time as the member of staff encouraged them to predict story events and discuss the feelings of the characters.

The carefully planned toys, resources and exciting activities on offer help children explore all areas of learning. Staff use lots of language with children to promote their communication skills and build their vocabulary. As a result, children learn words to help them express their ideas. For example, staff provide age appropriate explanations of evaporating water and a child says 'sun, all gone' as her wet hand print dries in the sun. Staff engage children in word play and they teach children the letters and sounds in words through many activities. As a result children develop their early reading and writing. Children's personal social and emotional skills develop well because staff provide good role models and teach children to collaborate and cooperate. Staff are skilled in maximising opportunities to develop children's understanding of mathematical concepts during routines and activities. They effectively use everyday play opportunities to introduce mathematics to the children. For example, children problem solved as they worked out how many crumpets they needed on each table at snack. The nursery provides a good range of recycled and natural resources indoors that challenge children's physical skills and develop their imaginations. Children develop good hand control as they play with puzzles, paint, draw, build and explore sensory materials. Outdoors children develop their physical skills as they exercise and play happily.

Overall, this means that children consistently develop the specific skills that will help them when they start school.

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

Staff place high importance on ensuring that starting pre-school is a positive experience for each child. Settling-in arrangements are flexible to meet individual children's needs, with parents encouraged to spend time with their child in the pre-school at the start of each session. Key persons work well with parents and invest time in getting to know each child. Consequently, children form secure relationships with staff and feel at ease in the setting. Children's behaviour demonstrates that they feel confident in the setting as they approach members of staff to ask for help when they need it.

Staff thoughtfully arrange the environment to develop children's independence and to encourage them to play cooperatively with others. For example, table top activities support children to talk to each other and collections of resources help children to play together. The outdoor area excites children. There are ample equipment and activities that

promote all areas of children's learning. Children build, balance, climb, run, jump and explore the natural world around them. However, the organisation of the daily routine does not fully support children to choose when they want to play outdoors. As a result, active children who want to run and children who particularly learn well outdoors do not fully benefit.

There is a high ratio of adults, who organise themselves well to support children's learning very effectively both inside and outdoors. Staff supervise children closely and are excellent role models for children to learn how to play safely and with regard for others. Children learn to manage small risks as they use the climbing and balancing equipment or handle scissors with care. Staff also ensure that access to the premises is carefully controlled to help keep children safe. A whiteboard at the back of the main door is used to record the number of children and adults in the setting at any given time. Staff update this as soon as children or visitors arrive or leave, and it is placed so that it is visible for staff at all times. Staff occasionally carry out headcounts as an additional confirmation. This ensures that staff know how many children are in the setting at all times. Children demonstrate they feel safe as they play confidently.

Staff encourage children to manage their own personal needs and older children wash their hands independently before eating. Children hang up their coats and help to sweep up after lunch, without an adult reminder. Staff talk to children about making healthy choices. Children display good social skills as they celebrate other's achievements, such as telling a friend 'well done' when they manage to jump from one circle to the next. This is because they receive good support to behave well as staff model manners and praise good behaviour. These important life skills help them settle more easily when they move on to school.

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

The play leader has a good understanding of her responsibilities in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have a strong awareness of the safeguarding policies and procedures, and effectively implement these. They confidently state what they would do if they had a concern about a child or other member of staff and who they would contact. This helps to safeguard children's safety and welfare. There are good systems in place to check that staff are confident in following the preschool's policies and procedures. The staff and management regularly review these to ensure they are fit for purpose. Staff carry out daily risk assessments, which protects children from harm as they play.

Staff are eager to continue developing their good knowledge of early years care and education. They willingly attend training and attain additional qualifications. This is reflected in the good quality of care and teaching within the pre-school. There are effective systems for managing performance. The play leader works effectively with staff to develop their skills and improve the quality of teaching overall. Staff reflect on their practice and the play leader formally observes their teaching. Staff read and access online

training materials regularly, which they discuss at staff meetings. This helps them keep up to date with new initiatives and research. The play leader keeps a reflective journal. This enables her to identify the impact of the improvements she makes and ensures that children benefit effectively from changes. For example, the newly organised art area has led to more boys taking part in art activities. The play leader works in partnership with the local authority to take on board advice to enhance practice in the pre-school. Since the last inspection, staff have improved procedures to enhance the quality of planning by developing monitoring records and ensuring that they plan activities to reflect children's individual needs and they have developed the outdoor provision. Parent questionnaires and a notice board provide parents with opportunities to feed their ideas into the self-evaluation process. Plans for further improvement currently include developing staff supervision and developing outdoor forest school provision.

Staff monitor children's progress. Their records are overseen by the play leader to ensure staff are consistently and accurately assessing children's achievements. This ensures that staff quickly identify any individual or group of children with specific needs so these can be met. The staff establish very strong partnerships with parents, schools, other settings and outside professionals. These contribute significantly to the good outcomes for all children in this well managed preschool.

## 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. We re-inspect nurseries and pre-schools judged as requires improvement within 12 months of the date of 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		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		There were no children present at the time of the inspection. 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101605
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	816822
<b>Type of provision</b>	Sessional provision
<b>Registration category</b>	Childcare - Non-Domestic
<b>Age range of children</b>	2 - 5
<b>Total number of places</b>	24
<b>Number of children on roll</b>	23
<b>Name of provider</b>	St Marks & Hesters Way Playgroup Committee
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16/01/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01242 690025 or 07812396974

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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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