

St John's Green Playgroup

St Johns Green Primary School, ST JOHNS GREEN, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7HE

Inspection date	03/10/2014
Previous inspection date	14/02/2014

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		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 are protected from harm as practitioners demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children.
- Children form close relationships with their key persons, who are extremely attentive to their needs. This helps them make effective emotional attachments, gaining the confidence to play and learn with their peers.
- There are strong partnerships with the parents. As a result, information is shared; children settle quickly and are offered continuity of care.

It is not yet good because

- Some practitioners lack understanding of how children learn and this results in variances in the quality of teaching. Children are not consistently challenged to make better progress.
- Practitioners do not complete the mandatory progress check for children aged between two and three years to assist in identifying any gaps in children's learning and development.
- Children's development in literacy is not fully supported in the outdoor learning environment.
- Children's decision making and independence skills are not fully supported at snack time. This is because the routine does not enable them to serve food, make decisions, set tables and clear away after themselves.

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 activities in the playroom and the outside learning environment.
- The inspector conducted a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector held meetings with the manager of the provision.
- The inspector looked at children's assessment records and planning documentation.
- The inspector checked evidence of suitability and qualifications of practitioners working with children, the providers self-evaluation form and improvement plans.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents and carers spoken to on the day.

Inspector

Lynn A Hartigan

Full report

Information about the setting

St John's Green Playgroup was established in 1981 and is registered on the Early Years Register. It is situated in the grounds of St John's Green Primary School in Colchester, Essex, and is managed by a committee. The playgroup serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a classroom within the school and there is a dedicated area available for outdoor play. The playgroup employs five members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications from level 3 to level 6. One member of staff has Qualified Teacher Status. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during school term. Sessions are from 9am until 12noon. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 24 children attending, all of whom are in the early years age group. The playgroup provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language. 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:

- improve knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage, with specific regard to the learning and development requirements, so that effective support is consistently given to all children to ensure that they make good progress
- complete a progress check for every child aged between the ages of two- and three-years and provide parents with a short, written summary of their child's development in the prime areas, identifying the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected.

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

- extend the use of text and signage in the outdoor area to fully promote literacy, and understanding of print for those children who prefer to learn actively outdoors
- provide more opportunities for children to develop independence skills by maximising their involvement in the preparation and serving of snacks.

Inspection judgements

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

Children are cared for by a team of practitioners who know their children well and are attentive to their physical and emotional needs. Children are provided with an educational programme indoors that covers all areas of learning and they enjoy their time at playgroup. However, the quality of teaching is variable, which means that some children are not making good progress. For example, children spontaneously show fascination when dropping conkers in water. Their interest is supported as they are given their own bucket of water to experiment with without the interruption of those who want to play at the water tray. Discussion takes place about sinking and floating which prompts further questions. However, those children who want to experiment by adding water to the sand are prevented from this experimental play as practitioners ask them not to mix the two. They are not offered any explanation as to why this may not be a good idea or offered any opportunities to discover what does happen when you mix different materials. This means children's learning is not consistently challenged or extended. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has relocated to another classroom within the school and now have a dedicated outdoor play space. Children relish their time outdoors and make good use of the resources and activities available to them. For example, they roll in leaves and use the mud kitchen to make cakes. Children have space to run and groups of children run at speed around the garden. However, staff do not use such play activities to extend children's learning or understanding of keeping themselves safe. For example, there is no thought given to suggesting that obstacles are set out to slow the pace and challenge children's physical skills by learning to negotiate and manoeuvre in the space available. In addition, children are not guided or encouraged to count the laps they complete, or to think about and discuss about how running fast makes them feel and what happens to their body. This is because not all practitioners offer the same quality interaction or teaching.

Children's communication, language, emotional and social skills are supported adequately. This is because the importance of these areas of learning and development are recognised by most practitioners to support children in their future learning and in preparation for school. For example, children are very secure and settled and ask lots of questions. They confidently talk to visitors and speak about how much they enjoy playgroup. They happily join in adult-led phonics sessions and are given time to respond to questions and think for themselves. This includes children who speak English as an additional language and those who require additional support in language development. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to ensure children's home language is fully embraced in play. For example, signs are now displayed in different languages from around the world. Children's favourite books are provided in dual languages and parents are positively encouraged to read to the children using their home languages. This not only supports children's general language skills but ensures all children feel valued and that text is written in many different ways and has meaning. However, fewer opportunities are provided for children who are active, outdoor learners, to value the meaning of text in the outdoor environment as it is lacking in print, signs and writing opportunities.

The playroom is bright and organised so that children can self-select from a range of quality resources and this successfully enables them to initiate their own games. Posters, number lines and text are displayed indoors and creates a bright and child-friendly environment. The manager works hard to establish positive partnerships with parents. They are warmly welcomed into playgroup and encouraged to stay and play if they

choose. Some resources, such as, story bags, are offered for parents to use at home with their children. Practitioners now complete regular observations of children's development and these demonstrate that most children are working within the typical range expected for their age, taking into account their starting points. These observations have improved since the last inspection and some documents such as, learning journals are available to parents and termly reports are now shared. However, practitioners do not have a secure knowledge and understanding with regard to the requirement of completing a progress check for children aged between two and three years. Parents are not offered a written summary of their children's progress or encouraged to formally share what they know about their child's development at this time. Children's individual learning may not be precisely supported in future planning; as a result, parents have fewer opportunities to offer what they know about their child's progress at home.

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

Children are happy, confident and settle quickly, engaging in an activity of their choice. This is because they have formed close attachments to their key person who are attentive and affectionate toward them, ensuring children are emotionally secure. This helps the smooth settling in process and children are very happy when they separate from their parents. Parents speak of all practitioners being friendly and approachable and know they can speak to them at any time about any concerns regarding their child. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, to ensure all relevant documentation is available and signed by parents, such as accident records. Children preparing for the move to full-time education are supported well. Positive links are established with the host school and children are already familiar with the premises. The children are invited to use the school facilities, such as, the school hall, for physical exercise or music and movement. This enables children to become familiar with the school environment, and supports their confidence when they move onto the next stages in their education. Other local primary schools are contacted and the teachers are invited to spend time at playgroup to meet the children. This also provides opportunities to discuss children's individual needs and promote continuity in care and learning.

Children play in a safe and secure environment because practitioners minimise any potential hazards through the use of daily risk assessments. Children are taught how to use equipment safely, such as, scissors when cutting, or when using real tools to cut logs as they participate in Forest School activities. This is because they are supervised well and taught how to keep themselves safe when using such equipment. They are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their friends. For example, they know to tidy away after themselves to prevent trip hazards. Arranged visits to the playgroup, from people such as, the local police officer, enhance children's learning about keeping safe and in particular around their own personal safety. Children behave well at playgroup. This is because children learn what is expected of them through the simple rules in place. Practitioners promote children's self-esteem through praise and recognition of their achievements.

Children understand the need to wash their hands before eating snack and after using the toilet as this is reinforced through the everyday routines. They learn about being healthy

and are able to exercise daily in fresh air. Drinking water is available for children to access throughout the session. Healthy and nutritious snacks are offered. Some opportunities encourage children's decision making and independence such as, deciding when they are hungry, spreading jam and attempting to pour their own drinks. However, the preparation of snack does not maximise opportunities to extend children's independence. For example, tables are laid and cleared away for them, plates are washed by practitioners. Fruit and vegetables are cut and pre-prepared. This means there are fewer opportunities in place for children to have a go for themselves and extend their independence skills at this time.

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

Children are protected from harm as the manager and team of practitioners demonstrate a secure knowledge of their responsibilities with regards to protecting children. The designated person completes appropriate training to enable them to support practitioners through any safeguarding issues. The committee and manager ensure all practitioners are suitable to work with children through safe recruitment, vetting and induction. Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. Play areas are monitored daily to ensure children's safety and hazards are minimised through safety checks before the children arrive. Defined job descriptions mean everyone is fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Children are cared for by practitioners who want the best for the children in their care. However, the manager is realistic when evaluating the provision and is aware that the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage are not fully understood by all practitioners. She is also aware that the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Practitioners' performance is now beginning to be supported through encouragement and training opportunities to enhance practice and improve knowledge; however, this process is not yet established sufficiently to ensure that children can make consistently good progress. Children benefit as they are now offered a range of learning and development opportunities within the educational programme, both indoors and outdoors. Since the last inspection, the playgroup has re-located and now have a dedicated outdoor learning environment. This is relatively new to the provision and practitioners continue to develop this aspect to ensure all areas of learning are planned for outdoors. Observations made by practitioners inform future planning. The manager monitors how well children learn so that any gaps in learning can be supported.

The manager positively encourages strong partnerships with parents. Parents comment that they can leave their children with confidence knowing their children are safe and well cared for. Most parents know their children's key person and are aware of their children's development records. They comment that they feel welcome and that all practitioners are friendly and helpful. Information for parents and the provision of policies and procedures are available through a prospectus and notice boards. As a result of the positive links with the host school, children are well-prepared and confident when moving on to school.

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

Unique reference number	402071
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	962735
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	20
Number of children on roll	24
Name of provider	St John's Green Playgroup Committee
Date of previous inspection	14/02/2014
Telephone number	01206500047

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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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