

Inspection of St Helens Playgroup

St Helen's Church, St Helen's Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2LS

Inspection date: 30 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff work together to create an inclusive environment that successfully meets the needs of the children and families using the playgroup. Staff interactions reflect the manager's aim of promoting children's love of learning and helping them become confident, sociable individuals with good language skills. The manager makes good use of local funding initiatives, especially to increase support for children's communication skills. A large majority of the children on roll speak English as an additional language. Staff are careful to ensure this is not a barrier when working with parents to support children's learning and development.

Children settle well and soon become familiar with the playgroup routines. Staff are knowledgeable about the needs and personalities of the children in their care. They provide children with a good range of activities to help broaden their knowledge and to build on what they already know and can do. Overall, staff demonstrate some strong teaching skills. They consistently reinforce simple behaviour boundaries to help children know what is expected of them. Children remind each other of simple safety rules, such as not to run indoors. They particularly enjoy spending time in the creatively designed outdoor area. Staff make good use of this area to promote children's curiosity and imagination.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Staff provide parents with guidance and advice to help them support children's learning at home. They have introduced a successful book-borrowing scheme which provides parents with tips on how to share books at home and use them to promote conversation.
- Parents are very complimentary about the friendly staff team. They comment on the rapid improvement they have seen in their children's speech and behaviour since attending. They welcome the opportunity to go on trips with the group, such as to look at signs of autumn at the local park.
- Staff continually chat to children about what they are doing to help extend their vocabulary. They speak clearly to the children and make good eye contact. Staff place a high priority on helping children learn to socialise outside of the home. They use children's interests to encourage them to play with others, share and take turns. They help children learn to sit together and choose from healthy options at snack time. Staff share strategies with parents to help promote a consistent approach to managing children's behaviour.
- The manager leads by example and demonstrates particularly strong teaching skills. She encourages staff to obtain qualifications to help extend their knowledge and skills. She identifies relevant training events and accesses funding opportunities to lessen the financial burden on the playgroup.
- Children delight in being able to run about and take part in energetic physical

play outdoors. They demonstrate good physical skills. They balance on tree trunks and steer bicycles on pathways. Staff follow children's interest in a spider's web and encourage them to describe what they can see when they look through a magnifying glass.

- The manager receives support from the chair of the management committee to help her support staff practice, such as by introducing supervision meetings. However, staff do not yet receive effective feedback and guidance to help them to continually develop their teaching and learn from each other's practice. Staff rely on the manager for guidance and support. Occasionally, this results in them not using their own initiative to make the most of learning opportunities as they arise.
- Children respond well to the patient and playful interactions of staff. They are confident to approach staff for comfort and support. Children are learning to take account of the feelings and needs of others. Staff encourage parents to come into the playgroup to share festivals and celebrations that are important to their family.
- Children take part in mark-making activities. Outdoors, they enjoy using large arm movements while painting on an easel. They excitedly spray the easel with water to see what happens next. Some children recognise their own names and are interested in attempting to write. Staff introduce mathematics into children's play, such as asking them which animals there are more of in the toy farm.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff regularly attend relevant training to help ensure their safeguarding knowledge is up to date with current practice. Staff are confident about their roles and responsibilities and the action to take to protect children and promote their welfare. They recognise the importance of following whistleblowing procedures if they are concerned about the behaviour of another member of staff.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- provide staff with more effective feedback and opportunities to share good practice to help raise the overall quality of teaching to a consistently higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	251649
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10059584
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children	2 to 3
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	20
Name of registered person	St Helens Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523389
Telephone number	07507455185
Date of previous inspection	18 June 2015

Information about this early years setting

St Helens Playgroup registered in 1999. It employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications ranging from level 2 to level 6 and one member of staff holds qualified teacher status. The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9.15am until 12.15pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two- and three-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Gill Thornton

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed the quality of teaching during activities indoors and outside and assessed the impact on children's learning. She carried out a joint observation with the manager.
- The inspector and manager viewed areas of the premises and discussed the delivery of the curriculum and the learning taking place. The inspector spoke to staff at appropriate times during the inspection.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and evidence of the suitability of playgroup staff and committee members.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of their views.

We carried out this inspection 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.

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