

Inspection of St Matthews Playgroup

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

Inspection date:

29 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children thrive in the care of the highly nurturing staff at the playgroup. They grow in confidence and settle quickly. Children arrive happy as staff chat to parents about children to ensure their continuity of care. Staff work hard to get to know children and their families and learn about their home life. They tailor the curriculum according to children's individual needs and interests. This helps children to feel safe, develop a sense of belonging and feel ready to explore. Children form strong bonds with staff, who are positive role models. Staff skilfully help children to learn the 'golden rules' at the playgroup, which is demonstrated in children's good behaviour and kindness. They say phrases such as 'you can have this one' and 'you can share mine' when playing with their friends. Staff encourage and motivate children by celebrating their achievements. For instance, staff award 'star of the day' to children, which helps to build their self-esteem and promotes a sense of pride in what they can do.

Staff have high expectations for all children to be successful in their learning. All children make good progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. If staff notice gaps in children's learning or development, they respond quickly. They work effectively with parents and other professionals to ensure that children receive the extra help they need.

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

- Partnerships with parents are strong. The manager recognises the importance of involving parents in children's learning. She holds open mornings to enable parents to talk with staff about their child's progress. Parents speak highly of the playgroup. They report how their children have grown in confidence since attending. Parents also say how well staff support children's speech and language, as children say new words they have learned when at home.
- Staff provide a balanced and varied curriculum of activities. They link these to their observations and assessments of what children know and need to learn next. Staff support children's language and literacy development. They share well-known stories with children and encourage them to take books home to read with their parents. Staff enthuse children when reading to them. Children listen intently and join in excitedly with words such as 'thick, oozy mud'. At circle time, children delight in counting together, which supports their mathematical development. Children strengthen their large- and small-muscle skills during activities. They pedal bikes, push wheeled toys and develop their hand muscles when creating patterns with pegs.
- Children enjoy participating in group learning activities. Staff interact well with children. They support children's choices and encourage them to talk through their own ideas. For example, as children explore play dough, they say, 'I want

to make mummy' or 'I want to make pizza.' Staff talk to children about their ideas and help them to achieve their goals. This promotes children's thinking skills and sense of achievement. However, on occasions, staff do not support quieter children to express their thoughts and ideas as much as possible.

- The manager cares about her staff team. She has arrangements in place to help to promote their ongoing development and well-being. They meet to discuss children's progress and to reflect on practice together. Staff attend training which supports them in their roles. Staff report high levels of well-being. They say that they feel well supported by their approachable manager. However, the manager does not always identify or address minor weaknesses in staff practice.
- Staff support children's independence skills very well. They sensitively guide children to accomplish everyday tasks for themselves. For example, at lunchtime, staff encourage children to peel their own fruit. Children find their place mats and tidy away after lunch. Staff also teach children to put on their high-visibility jackets independently before going outside. This helps children to learn valuable skills for the future.
- The manager and her team celebrate children's individuality. For instance, staff liaise with parents when children start to complete 'All about me forms'. Staff create 'special people booklets', which contain photos of children's family members and pets. Staff use these well to help new children settle in and encourage children to talk about themselves. This helps all children to feel valued and welcomed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities to protect children in their care from harm. Managers and staff undertake regular safeguarding training to help them recognise the signs and symptoms of possible abuse. Staff know the reporting procedures to follow should they become concerned about the welfare of a child. They also have awareness of wider safeguarding issues, such as how children may become subject to extreme or radical views. Staff know the actions to take should they become concerned about the conduct of a colleague.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- ensure that staff support quieter children as much as possible to express their thoughts and ideas and to help them benefit fully from learning experiences
- strengthen the arrangements for monitoring staff practice to ensure that minor weaknesses are identified and addressed swiftly, to raise the quality of teaching to a consistently high level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	101674
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10233538
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	St Matthews Playgroup Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519933
Telephone number	01453 756057
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2016

Information about this early years setting

St Matthews Playgroup has been operating since 1979 and is based in St Matthews Church Hall, which is to the west of Stroud town centre, Gloucestershire. The playgroup operates from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions for children aged between two and three years run on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am to midday. Sessions for three- and four-year-old children run on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9am to 3pm and on Friday from midday to 3pm. The playgroup employs five members of staff, all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications. The manager holds a qualification at level 4.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Michelle Grayling

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the playgroup received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the playgroup.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of their views.
- The inspector and a manager carried out a joint observation and evaluation of staff's teaching.
- Discussions were held between the manager and the inspector to evaluate the leadership and management of the playgroup.
- The manager led the inspector on a learning walk and discussed how they organise the curriculum.

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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