

Inspection of St Mary's Playgroup (Cheltenham)

Brotherhood Hall, Lyefield Road East, Charlton KIngs, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
GL53 8AU

Inspection date: 3 October 2022

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 are dedicated to initiating a positive parent partnership to ensure children are supported in their everyday needs. There is an effective key-person system in place that allows children to build secure relationships with a trusted adult when they are away from their primary carers. Leaders and managers value the importance of creating a personable approach, where all staff get to know every child well to create a strong sense of belonging and familiarity within the setting.

The welcoming and friendly staff aim to adhere to children's interests, providing an environment that enables children to explore a wide variety of resources. Staff make effective use of the resources, providing learning opportunities to cover all areas of development, including imagination, messy play, construction and storytelling. There is ample outside space for children to move freely and explore the many learning opportunities on offer, such as gardening and searching for minibeasts through a magnifying glass.

Children are succeeding in their communication and language skills and they have an abundance of opportunities to create conversations with staff and peers. Staff ask open-ended questions that allow children time to think about their responses. Children are provided with rich communication opportunities to discuss and manage their feelings and behaviour which assimilates significant events happening in their life. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well. For example, all children have involvement in the use of communication cards, creating an inclusive environment.

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

- Staff drive the children to be confident and independent individuals. The staff provide patience and encouragement, allowing opportunities for children to take responsibility for daily tasks, such as helping staff prepare for snack time. Children tidy away toys, wipe clean and dry tabletops, chop fruit and pour cereal and drinks. Staff also encourage name recognition by allowing a chosen child to set out name labels on the table. Children are capable of finding their own names and sitting in the appropriate chair for snack, all of which will prepare the children for school.
- Staff have implemented significant change to support the children in understanding the concept of time and changes in daily routines. For example staff have a timer in place to prepare children for when the time is approaching for a new activity or a change in daily movements, supporting children to manage behaviour appropriately.
- The settings ethos is to provide a child-centred approach to teaching, allowing children to direct their own learning through their own interests and preferences.

The children enjoy the freedom to choose but are sometimes disengaged, therefore a more strategic planning process needs to be embedded to build on the knowledge children already have and to support the progression of further development.

- Staff have excellent skills in keeping children safe and caring for their well-being to ensure children feel happy and secure within the setting. However, children need more opportunities to be challenged and to take appropriate risks in their play to develop resilience and promote healthy bodies and minds.
- Children have excellent role models within the setting. As the team compassionately work together, they demonstrate essential characteristics that the children have clearly adopted. Children behave impeccably well and listen and follow instructions from adults. They treat their peers with kindness and respect, share among themselves and use polite language such as 'please' and 'thank you', particularly at snack time.
- Leaders and managers continually strive to improve practice, providing ample opportunities for staff to progress their professional knowledge through a variety of training courses.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff ensure the safety and well-being of all children attending the setting. All staff prioritise regularly updated safeguarding training and are confident in following relevant procedures to ensure they act appropriately if they are concerned for a child's welfare. Staff are capable in keeping children safe and have a full understanding of how to effectively make contact with outside agencies when required, such as if an allegation is made against a member of the team. Staff effectively plan outings by organising all relevant safety equipment in case of an emergency. Management ensures the safety of staff and children by ensuring a safe recruitment process that initiates thorough suitability checks of staff.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- embed strategic and rational planning into the sequence of children's learning, to build on their existing knowledge and to support the progression of further development
- build upon children's resilience skills and personal development during play, by providing opportunities for children to safely take risks inside and outside of the setting.

Setting details

Unique reference number	101598
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10234030
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register, Compulsory Childcare Register, Voluntary Childcare Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	28
Number of children on roll	13
Name of registered person	St Mary's Playgroup (Cheltenham) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP519937
Telephone number	01242 260080
Date of previous inspection	13 October 2016

Information about this early years setting

St Mary's Playgroup (Cheltenham) registered in 1993 and is situated in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. The playgroup opens five days a week from 9am to 3pm, term time only. The group has strong links with Charlton Kings Infant School. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for children aged three and four years. The playgroup employs five members of staff; four of which hold appropriate early years qualifications.

Information about this inspection

Inspector
Michelle Oram

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the provider and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The nominated person directed the inspector around the playgroup for a learning walk, demonstrating how they deliver the curriculum and the opportunities they provide to the children.
- Parents shared their views of the setting with the inspector.
- The inspector observed the children during play and engaged in conversations throughout the day.
- The nominated leader discussed the leadership and management aspects of the setting.
- The inspector and deputy manager carried out a joint observation of a group activity.

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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