

Inspection of St Stephens Playgroup

Parish Church Of St Stephen, Maidstone Road, Chatham ME4 6JE

Inspection date:

12 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision requires improvement

Children are settled and easily separate from those dropping them off on entry. The key-person approach helps staff to build positive relationships with children and their families. Children are confident, and they clearly feel secure.

Overall, children are generally happy and content attending. They choose what they want to do from the varied range of activities on offer. Many of the older children show a great interest in looking at books. They engage enthusiastically as they sit with staff, listening to very well-read stories. In addition, they frequently choose to sit with friends and staff, selecting their favourite books and retelling familiar stories. Children learn new language and make progress in their communication and language skills.

Too much teaching is incidental. The curriculum is not sufficiently planned or embedded to focus on what children need to learn next. However, children benefit from lots of opportunities to engage in physical activities. For instance, they have the space to practise their large-muscle skills, throwing and rolling on large balls and climbing steps to use the slide. They move with good coordination and control as they enthusiastically join in with a yoga session, planned to de-energise the children before they sit to lunch.

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

- The manager has an overview of the curriculum and knows what she intends children to learn. However, this is not embedded into practice. Staff make observations and assessments of children's learning and have some understanding about what children already know and can do. However, staff do not use this information to accurately identify, plan and focus their teaching on what children need to learn next. As a result, although children make some progress in their learning, they do not make all the progress they are capable of.
- Children develop a sense of belonging in the setting. Staff implement consistent routines. For example, older children know to wash their hands before their snack. Children are becoming independent. They are encouraged to manage their own coats as they enter the playgroup and self-serve their own snack. This forms part of getting children ready for the next stage in their learning, such as moving on to school.
- Staff understand how to identify children who need additional support. They work with external agencies to ensure that children receive the consistent help they need. This helps to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities well.
- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes towards each other. Children generally behave well. Staff encourage children to take turns and

share resources. Staff model good behaviour and respect. This supports the children to develop good manners and respect for others.

- The manager and staff support children to lead a healthy lifestyle. They encourage children to be physically active and ensure that they follow good hygiene routines, such as regular handwashing. Staff promote children's awareness of good oral health. For example, they engage in discussions about brushing teeth during the games children choose to play. Staff offer healthy snacks, and the manager shares information with parents about the benefits of healthy eating along with healthy lunch box ideas.
- Staff sit alongside children as they play. They show an interest in their activities and generally engage them in conversations. However, they do not consistently check what children already know, ask questions or give clear explanations about what is happening next, to further develop children's understanding and learning.
- Despite the supervision processes in place, the manager does not sufficiently identify and address weaknesses in staff practice. Staff do not receive tailored coaching and mentoring to help them improve their teaching skills.
- Overall, partnerships with parents are effective. Parents are complimentary about the setting and staff. They comment on how their children enjoy coming. They say that staff provide information about children's days, both verbally and through online communication. However, staff do not always successfully gain detailed information about children's backgrounds or other languages spoken at home, to enable children to make the most of their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The provider and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe. They have secure knowledge of the signs and symptoms that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. All staff know the procedures they must follow to report concerns, both in the setting and to outside agencies. Managers and staff update their safeguarding knowledge through training. They demonstrate a clear understanding of when children may be influenced by radical or extremist views. Staff provide a safe and secure environment for all children. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly, and the security of the nursery site is given the utmost priority.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage, the provider must:

	Due date
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improve and monitor the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that staff identify, plan and deliver learning experiences that are focused on what children need to learn next	12/07/2023
ensure effective monitoring of staff practice so that weaknesses can be swiftly identified and appropriate support can be put in place in a timely manner to develop staff's teaching skills	12/07/2023
raise the quality of interactions and teaching to ensure that staff are consistently guiding children's development and helping children to understand what is happening next.	12/07/2023

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

- further develop partnerships with parents to gain an understanding of children's backgrounds and languages spoken at home, to support their learning needs even more.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY491596
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10263558
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	26
Number of children on roll	30
Name of registered person	St Stephens Playgroup Partnership
Registered person unique reference number	RP534767
Telephone number	07513598615
Date of previous inspection	4 May 2017

Information about this early years setting

St Stephens Playgroup registered in 2015 and operates from a Church hall in Chatham, Kent. The playgroup employs six members of childcare staff. Of these, four hold recognised early years qualifications. The playgroup opens from 9.10am until 1.10pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and from 9.10am until 2.45pm on Wednesday, during term time only. The playgroup provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Kimberley Luckham

Inspection activities

- The inspector discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the provider.
- The inspector talked to staff and children at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a joint observation during a planned activity.
- The inspector spoke with parents, to take into account their views of the playgroup.
- The inspector looked at relevant documentation and reviewed evidence of the suitability of staff working in the playgroup.
- The manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the playgroup and discussed the early years 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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