

# Church of the Ascension Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	509383
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Dyer
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<b>Registered person</b>	Church of the Ascension Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Church of the Ascension Playgroup has been running for over 30 years and was registered in 1993. The playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents and members of the community. It operates from the church hall at the rear of the Church of the Ascension in the Hall Green area of Birmingham.

The playgroup is open from 09:30 to 12:00 each weekday, term time only. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 25 children and currently has 19 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, one child receives funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The playgroup employs three staff, of whom two hold appropriate early years qualifications. The third staff member is working towards a qualification and staff are further supported by parents via a parents' rota. The setting receives support from the local authority and has achieved a 'Gold Quality Assurance Award'.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's good health and well-being is promoted as staff are aware of and respect children's individual dietary requirements. Staff encourage children to develop an awareness of healthy eating through discussions about the foods they are eating. Children are able to help themselves to drinking water and healthy snacks, including raisins, apple, tomatoes and breadsticks, throughout the session. Mid morning, children are encouraged to sit together for a sociable time when they are offered a drink of milk and a biscuit.

Children have access to a grassed outside area and often go for walks within the church grounds, benefiting from having fresh air and exercise within a safe and pleasant environment. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of exercise and plan for physical activity on a daily basis. During the session children have opportunities and space to develop control of their bodies, by riding on wheeled toys and playing with other physical equipment including tunnels, climbing frames and balancing boards.

Children learn about good health and hygiene through consistent routines and regular discussions with staff. Effective procedures are in place to minimise the possible spread of infections, including anti-bacterial gel being used to clean their hands before snack and children having individual towels for hand drying. One member of staff has attended training to ensure they have a professional knowledge of current first aid practices and a first aid box is accessible to allow staff to deal with any minor accidents effectively. Staff are also proactive in accessing further training in order to effectively meet children's individual medical needs and have attended training relating to allergy awareness and the use of epi-pens.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. Prior to children arriving the main hall is transformed into a child-friendly space by the staff team who prepare the room in advance, enabling children to settle quickly and engage in activities on arrival. Children are comfortable in the setting and move freely around the hall accessing the wide range of resources. Activities are presented attractively in order to gain children's attention and resources are plentiful, enabling children to play together at the same activity.

Most potential risks have been identified and reduced, however, the low-level heating pipes and radiators are accessible to children and therefore present a potential hazard. Detailed annual risk assessments are carried out, however, as ongoing risk assessments and the actions completed are not recorded they cannot be effectively monitored and reviewed. Staff discuss fire safety with children and provide opportunities for them to practise the fire drill to enhance their understanding of what to do in an emergency. Staff's knowledge of the fire evacuation procedures are clear and exits are accessible for children to leave from safely.

Security is good as external exits are kept locked to ensure unwanted visitors do not gain access to the setting or present a risk to the children. Staff are deployed effectively and children are supervised at all times to ensure their safety. Children's welfare is adequately safeguarded because staff have a basic understanding of child protection issues, including possible signs of abuse and the procedure to follow in the event of a concern about a child. However, the child

protection policy has not been reviewed in line with current guidance and staff lack confidence in the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against a staff member.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and enter the playgroup confidently, benefiting from staff being friendly and welcoming on arrival. The hall is well equipped with a wide range of good quality resources and child-sized furniture. Children's music tapes also play in the background helping to create a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Staff interact positively with the children, involving themselves in their play to enhance children's learning and enjoyment.

Children access a wide range of activities which staff plan to encourage them to have fun, including role play, clay, painting and sand play. The role play area is an exciting area where children are able to dress up and act out familiar roles, staff also described how they regularly change this area into different scenarios including a hairdressers, post office, home corner, shop and hospital.

Staff work well as a team and are enthusiastic and committed within their roles. They show enjoyment in their work and take time to develop warm, caring relationships with the children in their care. Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of child development and children's individual needs and interests.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children are progressing through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff have a suitable understanding and knowledge of the Foundation Stage, which is evident in the planning, which covers all the areas of learning. However, as staff do not plan for how they will adapt activities, to take into account children's different levels of attainment, more able children are not always challenged sufficiently. Topics are planned for the year and the learning objectives are highlighted in the short term plans. Staff follow the weekly activity plans and evaluate their effectiveness. Staff carry out informal observations and are beginning to make assessments of what children can do, however, these are not sufficiently linked to assist with future planning.

Staff have a calm approach to managing children's behaviour and use positive behaviour strategies. They understand the need to offer appropriate support to children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children with English as an additional language, adapting activities and equipment to ensure that all children are able to access the provision.

Children form good relationships with staff and each other. They are aware of the expectations of staff and respond positively to gentle reminders from the staff to share and take turns. Staff provide some opportunities for children to become independent, these include helping themselves to the café style snack area and selecting resources from those available. However, further opportunities for children to enhance their independence are hindered as all activities provided are chosen by staff and often adult led.

Children use their imagination as they play with creative materials including clay, sand and paint. They enjoy role play, where they are able to dress up and take on different roles. For example, dressing up as the traffic warden whilst other children 'drive' around the 'roads' on their bikes stopping when requested or when given a ticket for going in the wrong direction.

Children sing familiar songs and rhymes and have opportunities to use musical instruments to make sounds and rhythm.

Children have opportunities to observe and explore the environment whilst walking around the church grounds looking at the seasonal changes and through the involvement of external visitors including a company who brought in snakes, reptiles and rats for the children to look at. Children are also beginning to find out about simple technology as they use equipment including the remote control 'bugs', trying to navigate them around the hall.

Children occasionally explore the meaning of numbers, for example counting how many bricks are in their wooden tower, however, they are not encouraged by staff to count, calculate and problem solve within everyday routines and practical activities. Children's physical skills develop and improve through a variety of experiences, including riding bikes and scooters and using other physical equipment from their 'Top start' bag. Children also have daily opportunities to handle a range of equipment where they develop skills such as cutting, moulding and threading.

Children have opportunities to listen to stories and enjoy looking at books on their own, with friends or with a member of staff. Children also have opportunities to develop early reading skills during self-registration where they are starting to recognise their own names on arrival before putting it on the board to mark their attendance. Opportunities for early writing and mark making are available all around the setting. For example, children are able to make marks on the wall mounted chalk board, use various materials in the writing area and write for different purposes in the role play area.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Positive attitudes to others are encouraged as the children follow the example set by the staff team. Children have access to a wide range of play resources and books that show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. The environment is also rich in text of different languages, both welcoming children and their families into the setting and labelling the different activities and areas. Children gain an understanding of the wider world as they follow themes and projects and celebrate a number of different festivals. Staff have experience of working with children with English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are sound arrangements in place to meet their needs and staff work collaboratively with parents and, where necessary, other agencies to support individual children.

Staff have a clear and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. Children are well behaved, play well together and have formed positive relationships with other children and staff. Children have a good understanding of the boundaries and respond with enthusiasm to staff praise and encouragement. Children are able to take turns, with suitable adult support, and show care and concern for each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is appropriately fostered.

Clear information is provided regarding the operation of the setting and regular newsletters inform parents about the topics and activities the children engage in. However, the complaints procedure requires updating in order to ensure that confidentiality is maintained whilst still providing parents with information about previous complaints or concerns.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children benefit from the open relationships between parents and staff. Parents are provided with opportunities to discuss their child's progress with staff both informally and at arranged meetings. The setting also operates a parent rota system in order to enhance adult to child ratios and encourage parents to become involved in their child's play and learning. Parents report that they are happy with the setting and comment particularly on how settled their children are and how friendly the staff are.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Robust procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff who are appropriately vetted and suitably qualified and experienced to carry out their roles effectively. Most required documentation, which contributes to promoting outcomes for children, is maintained to a professional standard. The premises are well organised and space is used to its full potential to maximise children's play opportunities. Staff are deployed effectively meaning children are supervised appropriately at all times. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The playgroup is run by a qualified manager and children benefit from being cared for by knowledgeable staff who are confident with their own roles and responsibilities. Communication between staff is effective and they are committed to providing a good service to children and their parents. However, they have not yet established a system to monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of teaching or children's learning to plan for improvement.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting was asked to improve the organisation and safety in relation to the carrying out of risk assessments, documentation and the temperature of the water used for hand washing.

A new boiler has since been installed and water for hand washing is now maintained at an appropriate temperature. Children's safety and well-being is further enhanced as records detailing children's hours of attendance are now accurately maintained along with the procedures to be followed in the event a child was uncollected. Risk assessments have been completed in order to identify potential hazards to children, however, as they are not ongoing some potential risks have not been fully addressed.

The setting also was asked to provide further opportunity for children to develop an awareness of other beliefs and traditions, listen to stories and develop early writing skills.

Children now have a wide range of opportunities to listen to stories in various formats including story tapes, group story times and whilst at home through being able to loan books from the setting. Experiences for children to extend their knowledge of different cultures have been extended as they now have access to a wide range of resources promoting equality and are involved in celebrating and recognising different festivals. Staff also provide a wide range of opportunities for children to write for different purposes both in the writing area and role play area. Text is also included within the environment in different languages to help children recognise that words have meaning.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop the child protection policy and staff's knowledge of the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a staff member
- carry out regular risk assessments of the premises identifying actions to be taken to minimise identified risks and ensure that the hot water pipes and radiators do not pose a hazard to children
- ensure that staff are aware of the need to maintain confidentiality, in relation to the complaints log.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the observations and assessments undertaken on children are informative and used to plan for children's next stage in learning and continue to develop planning to ensure that staff are clear about how to adapt activities for children of different stages of ability
- provide children with further opportunities to become increasingly independent in choosing and carrying out activities
- improve opportunities for children to use and develop skills in mathematical development and problem solving
- implement systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

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