

Church of the Ascension Pre-School Playgroup

Chatterton Hall, School Road, Hall Green, BIRMINGHAM, West Midlands, B28 8JQ

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| Inspection date | 03/07/2014 |
| Previous inspection date | 26/02/2014 |

| The quality and standards of the early years provision | This inspection: | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| | Previous inspection: | |
| How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend | | 3 |
| The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children | | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision | | 4 |

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is inadequate

- Staff are not deployed effectively to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Staff do not successfully identify and minimise risks to children's safety and children are not sufficiently supervised at all times.
- Children are not learning how to effectively protect themselves and promote the safety and well-being of others. This is because staff do not provide children with enough opportunities to learn how to behave safely and to understand why safety practices are necessary.
- The monitoring of ways used to observe children and assess their progress is not sufficiently rigorous. Consequently, information gathered and used to inform the planning of activities, and communication with parents and others is not always accurate and of consistent quality.
- The use of self-evaluation is not yet effectively embedded to accurately identify strengths and ensure that weaknesses in the provision are promptly and effectively identified and minimised.

It has the following strengths

- Staff are warm, friendly and approachable and share clear written information with parents about the pre-school's child protection policy and procedures. As a result,

children settle easily and their parents are reassured.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector had a tour of the premises during the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with the nominated person, committee chairperson, management and staff at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector interacted with children throughout the inspection and observed activities in both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager of children engaged in outdoor play.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including children's records, learning and development information, staff records including suitability checks and a selection of policies and procedures.
- The inspector asked the manager about self-evaluation methods and took account of the views of parents gathered through discussion during the inspection.

Inspector

Carol Johnson

Full report

Information about the setting

Church of the Ascension Pre-School Playgroup opened over 40 years ago and is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents and members of the community. It is registered on the Early Years Register and operates from a church hall adjacent to the Church of the Ascension, in the Hall Green area of Birmingham. The pre-school serves the immediate locality and surrounding areas. It opens five days a week, from 9.15am to 12.15pm, during term time only. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Children are cared for in one large room and have access to two enclosed outdoor play areas. There are 27 children on roll in the early years age group. The pre-school receives funding for the provision of free early education for three- and four-year-old children and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are five staff members working directly with the children; four of whom hold appropriate qualifications. One member of staff holds a qualification at level 6 and one at level 4, and two members of staff hold qualifications at level 3. The pre-school receives support from the Pre-school Learning Alliance and the local authority.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the provider must:

- review and improve the deployment of staff to ensure the well-being of children and to promote the safe and efficient management of the pre-school; this particularly refers to ensuring that children are effectively supervised at all times and are always within the sight or hearing of staff
- improve the educational programmes for physical development and personal, social and emotional development by providing more opportunities for children to learn how to behave in a safe and sensible manner, and by helping them to understand the reasoning behind safety rules and the potential impact of their behaviour on their personal safety and that of others
- ensure that ongoing assessment is accurate and precise, for example, through more effective monitoring of how staff gather and use what they know about individual children to track their progress and identify the next steps in their learning and development.

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

- enhance methods for reviewing and monitoring the learning environment and the quality of staff practice so that weaknesses are quickly identified, and prompt action is taken to ensure children's well-being and help them reach their full learning potential.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Children of all ages happily participate in the experiences available to them. Staff observe children during play and record some of what they see and hear. They also talk to parents about what their children know, like and can do and gather some basic information about children's preferences before they start at the pre-school. Subsequently, staff use this information to assess children's progress and plan experiences for individuals and groups of children. Staff confidently describe the purpose of planned activities and what they hope children will achieve and learn. Furthermore, they use available guidance to help them assess children's progress and plan the next steps in children's learning. However, the quality of information gathered about individual children and the frequency of staff observations are variable. Consequently, even though children make progress, information available to staff, parents and other professionals is not precise enough to successfully monitor children's learning and plan for the next steps in their learning.

Children enjoy daily opportunities for outdoor play. There are two enclosed outdoor play areas available to children; a relatively small space, with a concrete play surface and a larger space that is accessed directly from the hall. The larger space includes a large expanse of grass, some mature trees and a small area of rocks, soil and longer grass. Children enjoy playing in the larger garden and develop a good knowledge and understanding of nature as they hunt for insects and notice the changing seasons. There is plenty of space for them to run around and staff provide resources that help to develop their muscle strength and physical skills. For instance, children can access balls, a goal net and a climbing frame. They also have fun playing team games, such as 'what is the time, Mr Wolf?' and 'hide and seek'. In the smaller space, children enjoy opportunities to ride wheeled toys and they develop an awareness of space as they avoid other people and obstacles. Consequently, children gain physical skills, expend energy and benefit from opportunities to do things on a larger scale than they can indoors.

Staff plan a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play, both indoors and outside. Experiences provided promote all areas of learning and interest and engage the children. For example, children eagerly help staff to make coloured dough and learn about weight, measure and what happens when the ingredients are mixed. Furthermore, they develop hand-to-eye coordination as they pour food colouring onto the mixture and use their muscles as they stir the ingredients. Staff thoughtfully ask children open-ended questions during this experience, for example, 'what do you think will happen when..?'. As a result, children are encouraged to think and respond. Also, staff model language, introduce vocabulary and encourage children to take turns and share during their play. Staff carefully consider the differing needs and interests of the children in their care and adapt activities accordingly. Specific times are planned during the pre-school routine for children to play and learn with their key person. This is either on a one-to-one basis or in their key groups. At snack time, children sit in their key groups and their key person teaches them about colours and numbers, and encourages conversation. For instance, the key person invites children to count the number of children around the table and identify the colour of their cups. Also, children are invited to talk about things that interest them and identify songs they would like to sing. Visual prompts are thoughtfully used by staff to encourage those children who are either reluctant or unable to speak to communicate. Furthermore, staff regularly introduce children to letters and sounds and use a range of strategies to encourage name and word recognition. For instance, children are encouraged to self-register on arrival at the pre-school by placing their name cards on a magnetic board. As a result, many of the older children are starting to form recognisable letters and can easily recognise their written names and those of others. Consequently, children are motivated to participate in experiences and gain many of the skills they will need for when they start school.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

On the whole, children show by their words and actions that they feel safe and secure. They happily go to staff members for comfort, reassurance and support and show a good sense of belonging. However, their well-being is hindered because staff do not supervise them well enough. Furthermore, insufficient attention is given to teaching children about possible dangers and how to protect their own safety. For example, staff fail to notice a

child entering the main hall unsupervised while everyone else is in the garden. This demonstrates a lack of vigilance from staff and highlights issues around poor staff deployment and awareness of risk. Rigorous measures are not in place to ensure that sufficient staff are placed both indoors and outside to successfully monitor safety and supervise children. On another occasion, a child runs into the hall with a pair of scissors in her hands without staff taking sufficient action to minimise the risk. Other children are seen to use climbing equipment while holding toys and with food in their hands and mouths. These examples highlight how children do not fully understand the need for safe practices and again show a lack of vigilance on the part of staff. However, staff do react appropriately when potential risks are brought to their attention but do not successfully anticipate such situations. Consequently, children's safety and welfare are not sufficiently protected and they are not learning how to protect themselves and others.

Children benefit from a warm and welcoming nursery environment where there is plenty of space for them to play and rest. They often initiate their own play and make lots of independent decisions about what they want to do and the resources they want to play with. Staff support children's growing independence by ensuring that a wide and varied range of activities and resources are easily accessible to them. On the whole, children behave acceptably. Older children help to look after the younger ones and children speak to staff respectfully and demonstrate good manners. Parents speak highly of the friendly and caring nature of the staff team. Some of the parents have used the pre-school for several of their children and praise the good level of communication between themselves and staff members. The pre-school, key-person system provides good support for new children and those moving on to other early years provision or full-time school. For example, each child is assigned a key person who obtains comprehensive information from parents to support their child's welfare and progress. The key person asks parents about their child's health, home routines, comfort items and any areas of development requiring support. This helps staff provide dependable and nurturing support for each child that reflects their needs and parental wishes. Furthermore, it shows parents that staff value information about the way in which their child behaves and learns at home.

Staff teach children about the importance of regular hand washing and eating healthily. Older children visit the toilet independently and they competently wash and dry their hands after doing so. Children help staff to clean the tables ready for snack and gain a sense of responsibility as they hand out cups and plates to the other children. Consequently, children are being prepared for school where they will be expected to be more independent. Staff model good hygiene procedures and cleverly use a familiar song to remind children to clean their hands before they eat. Outside professionals are invited into the pre-school to raise the awareness of staff, children and parents of healthy practices. These include oral hygiene specialists from a nearby children's centre who are invited to speak to children and parents about the importance of good dental health. Furthermore, snacks provided for children include plenty of fresh fruit, and children benefit from plenty of fresh air and physical exercise. Consequently, a range of strategies are successfully used to teach children and their families about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years

provision

Children's safety is not protected and not all legal requirements are met. This is because staff do not always identify and suitably minimise potential risks to children. Following the pre-school's last inspection, a monitoring visit took place and two notices to improve were issued. These were to ensure that the premises remain secure, and that risk assessment identifies all aspects of the environment that need to be checked on a regular basis, when and by whom those aspects will be checked, and how the risk will be removed or minimised. Subsequently, the provider took clear steps to improve security and the pre-school risk assessment processes were thoroughly reviewed. This included the introduction of daily safety checklists that are routinely completed by staff and audible alarms being fitted to fire exits. Nonetheless, children's safety is still not assured. The pre-school safety procedures and practices are not rigorously monitored by management or consistently followed by staff. On occasions, the supervision of children is not good enough and staff are not always deployed to best effect. Consequently, there are times when children's safety is at risk. However, in some other respects children's safety is promoted. For example, all adults working at the setting and on the pre-school committee have been appropriately vetted and resources are regularly checked to ensure their suitability. Furthermore, staff confidently identify some of the known indicators of abuse and all staff and committee members have completed online safeguarding training. In addition, the pre-school's written safeguarding procedures and the contact numbers for children's social services are displayed in the entrance foyer of the hall. Consequently, everyone knows the correct procedures to follow in the event of any child protection concerns.

The committee and staff team are very enthusiastic about what they do and are keen to raise standards at the pre-school. Staff describe how they regularly work beyond their contracted hours and meet on a regular basis to discuss children's individual needs and share ideas. Since the pre-school's last inspection, considerable strides have been made towards addressing identified weaknesses. For example, staff members and the new committee have attended a range of training and support from other professionals has been actively sought and utilised. Staff describe how recent training has raised their awareness of how children play and learn, and they feel that they have greatly improved their interaction with children. The committee received training from the Birmingham Pre-school Learning Alliance and explain how this has made them more aware of their role and responsibilities. They carry out some staff supervision meetings and have appointed an additional member of staff to assist the manager with administrative tasks. This member of staff acts as a valuable communication link between the staff team, parents and the committee and allows the manager more time to deal with her other duties. There are plans for staff members to attend further training and the pre-school is working towards a recognised quality assurance scheme through the Pre-school Learning Alliance. Nonetheless, the long-term impact of training and improvements made since the last inspection is yet to be fully realised. Furthermore, the monitoring of staff practice, the learning environment and the quality of staff observations and assessment of children's progress is not yet effective. This means that weaknesses in the provision are not always promptly identified and addressed and children's well-being and progress are not effectively supported.

Friendly relationships exist between staff and parents. Parents interviewed during the inspection compliment the pre-school and comment on how happy their children are to attend. They praise the friendliness of the staff team and describe the pre-school as 'brilliant' and 'fabulous'. General information about the pre-school and children's well-being is exchanged between parents and staff in a variety of ways. For example, parents receive newsletters, and staff talk to parents when their children are dropped off or collected. More specific information about the early years and child protection is collated and shared with parents to ensure that they are fully informed about these issues. Some children attending the pre-school also attend other early years provisions and there is frequent communication between everyone involved in children's care and education. Information is regularly shared about children's individual needs, achievements and activity plans. Furthermore, staff work in close partnership with health visitors, speech and language therapists and parents to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They discuss where children need to move on to next in their learning and development and agree consistent strategies to help children achieve and progress. Consequently, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities experience consistency of care and their parents are reassured.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|----------------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. |
| Grade 2 | Good | Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | The provision is not giving children a good standard of early years education and/or there are minor breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected within twelve months of the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be monitored and inspected again within six months of the date of this inspection. |
| Met | | The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration. |
| Not met | | The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration. |

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.

Setting details

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Unique reference number | 509383 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 975977 |
| Type of provision | |
| Registration category | Childcare - Non-Domestic |
| Age range of children | 0 - 5 |
| Total number of places | 25 |
| Number of children on roll | 27 |
| Name of provider | Church of the Ascension Playgroup Committee |
| Date of previous inspection | 26/02/2014 |
| Telephone number | 0121 7786835 or 0121 624 6517 |

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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