

OFSTED FEEDBACK MEETING FOR ALL PARENTS:
FRIDAY 22 APRIL 12.00-1.00

As you probably know we had our Ofsted inspection on Thursday 31 March 2016, just before the end of the Spring term. Unfortunately this inspection took place when the Manager was on leave for family reasons so Ofsted were not able to obtain all the information they required on the day. Normally a playgroup would also have just one inspector, but her senior from Ofsted arrived late morning to monitor her performance. Although we understand that this is not normal practice, the supervisor became actively involved in the actual inspection which put huge additional pressure on the staff and their responses. We believe these factors adversely affected our rating.

The resulting report which is attached for you to read, was received during the holiday. The staff, Board and Manager are shocked and distressed at the resultant outcome, which we feel in no way reflects the high quality of our setting. The Inspectors make their decisions on what they believe they have seen (a very limited snapshot, which in our case meant they were not open to look at much of the evidence which they were presented with); we now have to respond. We are considering a formal complaint about the inspection, as we do not believe it is representative of how we operate or indeed how we work with you as parents or how we support children through care and education. We are also arranging urgent action on some of the issues raised.

We have already informally discussed several points in the report with OFSTED. We are currently putting together evidence from staff and outside professionals and asking you, as parents, to support us by letting us know (in writing please) how you feel we have supported you with your children both now and in the past. It seems Ofsted believe we do not support you or your child, but the staff and I would like to think you feel differently.

There are several action points on page 2, which we have to respond to by 5 May (giving us just 12 days). Most of these action points are already in place so will not take long to fully implement. They will however need some additional evidence from yourselves and from the staff and outside agencies.

Action 1: As the manager works very closely with the staff during the sessions, supervising, assessing and supporting them, formal, written supervision had not taken place. We are now putting this in place. We provide quality teaching and learning experiences for the children as we are sure you have seen while your child has been at the playgroup.

Action 2: we will be writing to childminders and other settings where some of the children attend as well as St John's to let them know what we are working on and asking them to let us know what they are doing to support your child. Please let me know if you do not wish us to share this information with them.

Action 3: We already have thorough assessment systems in place including the WellComm assessment tool and this last term the assessment shown to us by the Speech and Language Team. We use a County wide assessment monitoring database to check on the long term progress of each child or group of children. This we believe wasn't fully understood by the inspectors as it is very complex. As it is only completed once termly they were looking at out of date results from the end of Autumn term, as the end of Spring 2016 data were not yet due to entered; this data obviously showed further progress by all children.

Action 4: we believe we have a strong partnership with parents, that we are available to discuss your child at any reasonable time, that we do approach you if we have concerns as you approach us. We believe we are very good at meeting the children's needs. We will be sending a note home to all of you to let you know what we are working on with your child this term and invite you to add your comments.

Action 5: Again we believe we have many resources and ideas in place of how to help those of the children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and that we do support both your child and you to help children to progress with their English. We also accept that children who are learning additional languages can take longer to learn to speak fluently. We settle all children with care and in full co-operation with you, whatever their language skills and we invite all parents to stay if they feel this will help their child initially. Ofsted may not have looked at this. The team will be reflecting this area of our practice to see if there is more we could do.

There are lots of other concerns about the way this report has been written and we would like to give you all the opportunity to ask questions and add comments by **inviting you to attend a meeting on Friday 22 April 12.00-1.00**. The Manager will of course be available to discuss your concerns at other times as needed.

We are asking for your support in responding to this outcome and hope that as many of you as possible are willing to write a short note or letter letting us and thereby Ofsted know how you believe we have supported you and your child during your time at St John's. We would like to have this information ready asap and by 3 May as Ofsted require our initial response that week and we have to submit evidence about what actions we have taken to answer their concerns.

We trust that you will continue to support St John's during this difficult time and we can assure you that our care and education is not as described in the report.

Kind Regards

Neil Wilson
Chair of Playgroup Board

and Celia Mills
Manager