



# Harebreaks Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY227780
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 May 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Anneliese Fox-Jones

<b>Setting Address</b>	The Harebreaks, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD24 6NF
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<b>Registered person</b>	Karen Wright
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care
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## 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?

Harebreaks Pre-school opened in 1973. It operates from two rooms at the North Watford Methodist Church. The Pre-school serves the local area.

The pre-school is registered to provide care for a maximum of 26 children under five years at any one time. There are currently 64 children on roll. Of these, 40 three-year-olds receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with learning difficulties and also supports

children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens 09:30 to 12:00, Monday to Thursday and between 12:30 to 14:45 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, term time only.

Seven part-time staff work with the children and two students are in place. Three staff have early years qualifications to Level 2 or Level 3.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow appropriate health and hygiene procedures. Children wash their hands before snack, cooking and know to wash them again after messy play. There are effective systems in place to encourage this, such as, by providing a bowl and towel next to separate activities. This helps children learn simple health and hygiene practices. They gain additional experience through participation in activities which promote being healthy, for example, during planned topic work.

Children enjoy their snack time as they sit in small groups. They benefit from varied and nutritious snacks including fruit and vegetables, which the children can help to prepare and cut. Children can choose between milk or water at snack time. Staff are aware of any health needs of the children and receive relevant information from parents to ensure appropriate care is provided. Children benefit from the staff's up to date knowledge in first aid.

Children enjoy physical activity inside. They are able to move in different ways and practise refine skills with various equipment. Children take risks, show enjoyment and enthusiasm when climbing large apparatus. Children develop strong manipulative skills, they have many opportunities to use their hands. They manipulate dough, pencils, paint brushes, rollers and control their movements when building using bricks.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a clean, well-maintained and secure environment. Particular attention is paid to the security of the premises. This ensures that no unauthorised persons are on site and children can not leave unsupervised. Children use a broad range of suitable equipment which is appropriate to their needs. They independently access an extensive range of toys and resources attractively set out by staff each session. They have access to stimulating areas of play as well as a comfortable book corner with well-maintained books.

Children are generally protected from harm as staff have implemented some safety precautions. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they are told not to run

around and to be careful when climbing the apparatus and to come down the slide appropriately. Children gain awareness of the emergency evacuation procedures as these are discussed and practised. Visitors, such as the fire brigade, police officer and paramedic, also help children develop an awareness of keeping themselves safe. Children's welfare is safeguarded as staff follow sound procedures regarding child protection and have a clear understanding of issues due to recent child protection training attended.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. They play together, interact well with staff and move freely around the setting, accessing the activities set out for them by staff. Children show an interest in what they do, they busily engage in role play, play dough, construction, painting, cooking, water play, craft and reading. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of security and help them develop confidence. A broad range of activities and play opportunities help to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Children benefit from the staff's recent training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Use of this will further enhance the experiences offered to the younger children.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making adequate progress towards the early learning goals. Long term plans provide a learning environment that is broad and balanced across the six areas of learning. However, staff lack a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and children are not always appropriately challenged or questioned within all areas of the curriculum. Consequently, this has an impact on how and what children are learning. An effective planning and assessment system has yet to be implemented, therefore children's individual progress has not sufficiently be monitored. Staff are aware of children who may need additional support but this is not reflected in the planning.

Children enjoy books, looking at words and discussing the story. They show enjoyment as they listen to stories during one to one reading with an adult and as a whole group activity. Reading is further reinforced through book bags which positively encourage children to change their books regularly. Children have many opportunities to make marks. For example, through painting, drawing and stencilling. Thus they are encouraged to develop emergent writing skills. Children identify their name cards from a small selection at snack time. A letter of the week is briefly discussed to promote children's understanding of the alphabet. Children have some opportunities to explore numbers and counting, such as the number of children present and when singing familiar rhymes and songs. This promotes the children's understanding of adding and taking away. Children weigh play dough using scales in their play. They have opportunities to help weigh and measure ingredients each week when making fresh play dough. Children explore capacity in water as they fill various containers with water.

Children negotiate space when using wheeled toys and prams around obstacles.

They manipulate small objects with control when building, painting, and sticking. Children enjoy using large climbing apparatus and move their body to create intended movements from instructions on a tape. Children are enthusiastic to develop and control their fine motor skills when cutting, rolling and manipulating different textures.

Children settle well and are developing concentration as they persist in activities of their choice for long periods of time. Children are developing sound relationships with others. They have opportunities to develop a positive self-image through activities that reflect and value a variety of cultures and celebrations. Children have some opportunities to develop their independence. Children experience a range of media and explore their environment using a range of their senses. They are beginning to differentiate between different colours. They are enthusiastic to join in familiar songs and participate in imaginative play, using props to support their role play. Some creative art materials are set out in an accessible stacking box system. Children use tools for a purpose with play dough and in their creative work. Children explore changes in growing objects, such as sunflowers and cress. They learn a sense of time when discussing the day and the weather and gain an awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others throughout the year. Children have opportunities to make items work and develop their knowledge of technology through the use of tills, keyboards, telephones, hole punchers and a computer, which is currently not working.

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

The provision is good.

Children receive a warm welcome from staff. On arrival they separate from their parents and carers with ease. Children with special needs are supported well within the setting. Staff are aware of the need to work in partnership with parents and other agencies. Children's individual needs are respected and their interests promoted. They access their environment independently. They are generally well behaved. Staff encourage the children in positive pursuits, such as sharing and taking turns and reward them with meaningful praise. Children are respected and have equal access to all resources and materials. A varied range of toys, resources and activities reflect positive images and increase children's awareness of the wider world. Staff encourage parents and carers to be actively involved within the pre-school through a rota system.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered. A wide range of activities and topics cover a range of cultures and beliefs. Individual children's backgrounds are acknowledged and respected. Children show wonder when searching for mini-beasts in the soil and when learning about various living things through their work. They are learning to manage their behaviour and are encouraged to develop an understanding of right and wrong through negotiations in their play. Children engage in conversations with adults and their peers and are developing good social skills. Children are encouraged to show an appreciation of various celebrations and customs and talk about their own family experiences.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Information is displayed for parents

on a notice board. Good quality information is given to parents regarding the pre-school and the Foundation Stage curriculum in the prospectus. Children's needs are identified initially as staff obtain adequate information about their background and interests from entry records that parents complete. Children's activities and achievements are discussed informally with parents. Parents praise the nursery and feel the environment is stimulating and welcoming. They speak highly of staff who they reported were caring and approachable. Staff keep parents and carers informed. They make time to give verbal feedback on a daily basis if it is required. Regular newsletters sent out and book bags are a good home link to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by a committed team of staff, many who are long standing employees. Staff are deployed appropriately and work well together. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Most records, policies and procedures are effectively organised and generally maintained in line with the National Standards. However, some documentation does not include accurate detail or maintain confidentiality. There remains some weaknesses in safety that children are not fully protected from because a robust risk assessment procedure is not effectively in place. Children are happy to arrive, they feel at ease in an environment that is attractively set out by staff each day. Children have an appropriate sense of time, which is developed by staff as they learn about the daily routines. They know when it is time to tidy away when the music comes on. Children are keen to get involved in putting toys away and taking responsibility for an area. Children learn about space as they enjoy free play and organised games in the hall. They are confident movers who take part in activities that develop their physical skills. Staff are enthusiastic as they take part in music and movements activities.

The leadership and management of the provision is satisfactory. Staff work well with the children and follow their interests most of the time. However, this interaction is mainly in a supervisory role rather than a teaching one to bring out the maximum learning opportunities and challenges in all routines and activities. Consequently, children's learning is impeded through the limited updating of staff's knowledge and skills. Senior management acknowledge that staff have a basic understanding of the educational programme. However, activities and organisation of the nursery education is not effectively monitored. Although recent teacher support and input has given the group new planning and assessment systems to develop staff's knowledge of activities and their learning potential. Overall the pre-school meets the needs of the children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to implement procedures for uncollected children, administering medication, recording risk assessments and a complaints procedure to ensure Ofsted details are available for parents. The groups prospectus was updated after the last inspection to include changes in these policies.

The group decided on a policy of not administering any medication to children. However all policies are currently in the process of being reviewed to include further changes and amendments to detail. Children are generally safeguarded because risk assessment records ensure that safety checks are in place through visual checks and further observations every half-term.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to develop staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage, opportunities to extend planning to challenge children, to use assessments and evaluations to help move children on the next steps in their learning and to provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage. Some progress has been made in these areas but further development has been acknowledged, is ongoing and remain as recommendations. Children benefit from the information provided to parents on the Foundation Stage. This gives parents the option of being involved in children's learning and extending their knowledge in the six areas of learning. Staff benefit from the qualified teacher input which will further improve detailed plans and assessments. Consequently children have the potential to gain from more opportunities to extend their skills, thinking and learning.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2005. 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.

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### **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):

- ensure an appropriate system is in place to monitor the progress and promote the development of children with special educational needs within the setting
- ensure all policies, records and procedures are robust and up to date for the efficient and safe management of the provision, this refers to attendance and accident records, child protection and uncollected child policies and rigorous

risk assessment procedures

### **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):

- develop effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching for nursery education and increase staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage
- continue to develop an effective planning and assessment system to ensure these are informative and used appropriately to plan for individual progression and learning.

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