



## Holy Spirit Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 303470

**Inspection date** 15 March 2006

**Inspector** Chris Scully

**Setting Address** Holy Spirit RC Primary School, Cotterill, Halton Brook, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2NL

**Telephone number** 01928 572589

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**Registered person** Holy Spirit Pre School Playgroup Committee

**Type of inspection** Integrated

**Type of care** 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 good.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Holy Spirit Pre-school opened in 1984 and operates from a purpose built building. It is situated in the grounds of Holy Spirit Primary School in Runcorn. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any time. The pre-school opens each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 37 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 17

children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local community. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs.

The pre-school employs three staff. All staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a healthy and hygienic environment. They thrive because staff follow effective procedures and practices, which meet the children's physical and health needs. Children are well aware of the need to wash their hands before snack time and after certain activities, such as, after going to the toilet and playing outdoors. Children are very confident to see to their own needs, with gentle reminders provided to younger children in order to foster their independence.

Good adult support enables children to gain an understanding of staying healthy, such as, blowing their noses and disposing of tissues correctly to prevent the risk of cross infection. Daily discussions with staff about healthy topics promote the children's understanding about being healthy. During circle time staff talk about the pre-school rules, one child reminds everyone that we do not spit. Staff question the children as to why and they explain because 'it has germs that get in our tummy and make us ill'. A detailed sick children policy and procedure ensures staff are alert to children who may be feeling unwell and implement all necessary arrangements. Staff are trained in first aid and are able to respond effectively to accidents or incidents providing children with appropriate support and treatment. Staff have a secure understanding of the children's individual medical needs and meet these well in practise.

Children's healthy eating is actively promoted through the provision of healthy snacks throughout the day. This is effectively supported by appropriate hygiene routines and procedures that are employed by staff when preparing snacks. This means children are kept healthy and free from infection at all times. The café style snack time provides excellent opportunities for children to engage in conversation with staff and their friends. They relish the opportunity to choose their snack from a variety of healthy options which include cereals, fruit, toast and yoghurts. Children are confident to choose their drink from a selection of fresh juice, milk or water. Older children are confident to show their expertise at pouring their drinks and milk on their cereal. Younger children are becoming competent at this task, although, the size of the jug hinders their progress. Children have access to fresh drinking water, however, the position of the dispenser hampers their ability to access this independently. Staff are proactive in working with parents to ensure children's dietary needs are met well in practice and encourage them to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

Children's physical development is promoted well. Children have daily access to the outdoor area where they confidently use a range of wheeled toys and resources.

Staff plan a comprehensive range of activities to support children's physical development, which included using large apparatus within the school hall. The children particularly enjoy Sticky kids activities. These enable the children to test, explore and develop their physical control through dance, using additional props, such as ribbons, and exercise. Throughout these sessions the staff are fully involved with the children and take part in the activities. This means children learn that exercise and being healthy is fun. Children develop competent small physical skills through access to a variety of activities and equipment, for example, using construction kits, programming the CD player and using a variety of craft materials.

Staff have a good understanding of the Birth to three matters framework. The framework has been implemented well across the pre-school and is used effectively to plan and provide good age appropriate activities for younger children. This means younger children's health, well-being and all round physical development is successfully fostered.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, welcoming and clean environment, which means they can play and explore their surrounding in comfort. Their safety and welfare is actively promoted because they are cared for in a well-planned and organised environment. This is further supported by the effective cleaning and maintenance systems in place to maintain the building. There is a wealth of art work displayed around the setting, although, more adult led displays are in more prominent positions. Children are very proud of their work and are confident to show visitors. They are particular keen to look at their photographs on the special person wall.

Children's safety is significantly enhanced by the staff's understanding of the health and safety policy and procedures. These are supported by the risk assessments, which are carried out daily on all areas, and the appointment of health and safety officers. Clear procedures are in place for taking children on outings, although these are limited at the present time due to staffing changes. Children learn to keep themselves safe through well planned practical activities and discussions with the staff. These include talks on stranger danger and visits from the community police. The children's safety is further enhanced by the setting's commitment to ensuring all volunteers undertake criminal records bureau checks. Children clearly understand the rules of the setting, which enable them to stay safe, for example, no running indoors and not going into the kitchen area.

Children access a good range of toys, resources and equipment. Resources are used effectively to support activities and enhance children's enjoyment. Children have very good opportunities to develop independence skills as they self select toys and equipment from those on offer and from low level storage units. Children's choice and independence is further enhanced by the organisation of equipment in clear storage boxes. This means they are able to quickly identify resources, make their selection and become engaged in play.

Children's welfare is given high priority. Staff have a sound understanding of child

protection issues and use information from the booklet 'what to do if you are worried about a child' well. The child protection policy supports staff's decision making and future action. However, it is not clear within the policy on the procedures to take if an allegation is made against staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled at the setting. They are learning through a range of well-planned activities and opportunities which promote their all round development. This is supported by the staff's understanding of the Birth to three matters framework and curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. All children are offered good opportunities and experiences, which are planned by qualified and experienced staff. For example, older children enjoy water play looking at what sinks or floats. Younger children enjoy using play dough and painting activities, for example, children were encouraged to use the rollers to paint postman Pats van. However, one child became engrossed in painting their hand red and using this to paint with, they smiled in delight as they made handprints on the paper. Staff are extremely supportive of their creativity and provided lots of praise for them, which successfully fostered the child's confidence and self-esteem.

Children arrive at the setting excited and eager, they are greeted warmly by the staff who are enthusiastic and welcoming. Staff communicate and interact well with the children and as a result of this children are becoming competent learners. All children relate well to one another and are keen to seek out their friends and engage them in various play experiences. Children under 3 years enjoy a well-planned and executed range of activities that support their all round development. This is enhanced by the appointment of a Birth to three coordinator, who has attended training courses in order to effectively implement the framework and provide good care to younger children. As a result of this all children are actively engaged in a range of interesting, purposeful play and learning experiences.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy a varied range of stimulating activities which actively engage their interest. They enjoy and are involved in activities which support their learning across all six areas of learning. They arrive eager and motivated to learn and to try the new experiences offered to them. This is supported by the effective planning systems and staff's extensive knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Staff are skilled at adapting activities to meet the children's needs and to incorporate spontaneous events, such as, recent snow falls. Children's progress is effectively charted and reviewed in order to promote their ongoing learning.

Staff consistently pitch questions at the right level for each child and are highly skilled at asking open-ended questions, which promotes children's thinking and problem solving skills. When discussing the pre-school rules, staff ask the children can they remember a rule, and ask them to explain what that means, for example, we don't run because we might hurt ourselves. Through this effective use of questioning

children are developing a clear understanding that their actions have consequences on themselves and others. Subsequently, children are well behaved and enjoy the opportunities to undertake specific jobs on their special day, such as, collecting the cups after snack time. Staff use time and resources effectively to promote children's learning opportunities and experiences. Children are able to become engaged in activities and are able to resist distractions due to the effective organisation, for example, at story time staff pull the curtain across the quiet area to create a cosy relaxing atmosphere. This means the children are not distracted by other staff who are preparing their snack, and are able to enjoy their story.

Children are making good progress in developing their independence skills. They are able to deal with personal tasks, pour their own drinks and help themselves to snacks. Children are developing effective communication skills as they converse with staff and their peers. They are enthusiastic speakers at circle time, they wait patiently for their turn and enjoy conversing with visitors. Staff encourage children's interest in reading and words through practical activities, for example, when talking about St Patrick's day the staff ask can they remember the name of the flower. They give a gentle reminder that it begins with 'sh.' One child replies shampoo, the staff applaud his idea and explain that they are looking for the word shamrock. This positive reaction from staff means that the child feels valued for their ideas and successfully fosters their self-esteem. Children have opportunities to practise writing and mark making skills within the designated area and are beginning to form recognisable letters. However, at times children's opportunities to write for a purpose is limited.

Children are developing an understanding of numbers and are able to count using a variety of objects, for example, themselves at registration. Children recognise shapes within the setting and are developing an understanding of calculating. At snack time one child explains to the visitor that they need two pieces of toast, as one and one makes two, and if they put the toast together it makes a diamond. They are developing sorting and sequencing skills as they sort construction pieces and help to tidy away their equipment.

Children are developing a clear understanding of the wider world, different cultures and beliefs through practical activities and recourses. They celebrate various festivals throughout the year and are encouraged to say a prayer before snack time. They learn to care for other living things as they grow plants and care for the pre-school pets. Children show concern when they realise no one has yet fed the hamster and tell visitors he is only a baby. Children are skilled at using everyday technology, they are extremely proficient at loading the CD player and finding the song of their choice. Children display an eclectic range of musical tastes, which are well supported by staff. They are engaged in simple science experiments, such as, sinking and floating.

Children enjoy a range of creative experiences both indoors and outside. They use their imagination well in role play, creating their own scenarios effectively and delegating specific roles. They are confident to use instruments and play along enthusiastically to music tapes, such as, musical minis. Children learn to understand tempo and to play loud or softly as they listen to different types of music.

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

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and have access to all activities and experiences offered. Children show respect for one another as they take turns and wait patiently to speak at circle time. Effective record systems ensure children's individual needs and circumstances are known and provided for by staff. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children learn about the wider world and diversity through a range of practical activities, such as, festivals. They have good opportunities to access a range of resources depicting diversity. This means children have a positive attitude to others.

Children with special educational needs are supported well by staff. The Senco liaises closely with parents and other professionals to ensure children's needs are effectively met. Information is effectively disseminated to all staff to ensure consistency and continuity of care. All documentation to support children is in place, is monitored and reviewed regularly to promote children's ongoing care and learning experiences. Parents have stated that staff are very supportive and provide good care to children.

Children are well behaved. They receive high levels of praise and encouragement for their achievements from all staff. This successfully fosters the children's self-esteem; they are proud of their work and are keen to share this with others. One child proudly displays the three starfish she has made out of dough. Staff are positive role models to children. They are consistent in their approach to managing unwanted behaviour, and provide clear age appropriate explanations. This means children are developing an understanding that their behaviour can have implications for themselves and other children.

The partnership with parents is good. Staff obtain information about children's needs, requirements and other relevant information to ensure their safety, well-being and enjoyment is addressed. All consents are in place, which means children are cared for in line with their parents wishes. Parents are kept up to date with children's progress through informative verbal exchanges on their arrival and departure, for example, clear explanations were given regarding the inspection. Children attending the playgroup session are well informed about their child's progress. They are provided with written and verbal information on their achievements and development.

Parents of children in receipt of funding for nursery education are well informed of their child's progress. These include regular parents evenings, and newsletters. Effective systems enable parents to become involved in their child's learning and to enable them to comment upon their progress. The partnership with parents is highly valued by staff who actively encourage parents to share information about their child to extend their learning and play experiences. Parents are extremely complimentary about the staff and the care they provide. They comment upon their professionalism, that they are approachable and provide good support to the children. Parents state that their children are happy and enjoy their time at the setting.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are settled in the well organised environment, which is set up in many welcoming work areas. Good use is made of room dividers to identify the different work areas. Consequently, children enter happily and are quickly off to play in their self chosen activities. Qualified and experienced staff support children's learning and development well. Staff are committed to and are offered further opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge. This has a positive impact upon children's learning and all round development.

Policies and procedures are in place although there are omissions within the child protection policy, and the complaints policy. All legally required documentation, which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place, is well maintained and reviewed regularly. Staff meetings, appraisals and induction systems are used effectively to ensure staff are kept up to date with policies, procedures and changes in regulation and childcare initiatives.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from the enthusiastic and highly committed leadership and management of the setting. The manager and all staff work very well together to ensure all children receive good quality care and education. The strong partnership between the manager and staff means children enjoy a varied range of activities in a fun learning environment. Effective systems enable senior staff to monitor the provision looking at staff performance, training, activities and the curriculum. Clear development plans are in place for the provision and staff. Regular team meetings keep staff fully informed and enables them to work consistently across the provision. Overall, the needs of all the children are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection there were three recommendations relating to policies. The behaviour management policy now contains information on how bullying will be addressed within the setting. The equal opportunities policy is effectively shared with parents. The uncollected child policy has been revised to include lost children. However, this does not include a break down of the action to be taken and the timescales involved. Two points for consideration were raised at the last nursery education inspection. Staff have additional resources to enable children to experiment, explore and investigate how and why things work. Parents are actively encouraged to make contributions towards their child's learning. In addressing these issues the setting has improved upon the safety, well-being and learning opportunities for all children.

## **Complaints since the last inspection**

There are no complaints to report. 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 good.

### 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):

- improve the opportunities for children to independently access fresh drinking water
- improve the policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the current guidance

#### 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):

- further improve upon the opportunities for children to practise mark-making and writing for a purpose.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)