



St Bernard's Independent Prep School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY305560
Inspection date	22 March 2006
Inspector	Susan Elizabeth Tovey
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Registered person	St. Bernard's Independent Prep School
Type of inspection	Childcare
Type of care	Full day 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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Bernard's Preparatory School is a catholic independent co-educational school for children aged two-11. It was registered for younger children aged two-three years in 2005. It operates from the Early Years Department of the main school and is situated in Slough, Berkshire.

The setting is registered for eight children between two years and three years, there are currently five children on roll. The Preparatory School welcomes children of all faiths and beliefs and serves the local and surrounding communities.

The Preparatory School opens five days a week during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are procedures in place to support children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because the staff follow highly effective procedures and practices which meet the children's physical, nutritious and health needs. The exceptional adult support and guidance helps children gain an excellent understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent in their personal care.

Children explore, challenge and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. The staff have a very thorough knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework. Their excellent understanding of each child's stage of development means that children are confident to try out new skills. Children ask for help when needed and set their own limits within the safe environment. For example, children are able to pedal bikes with ease and competently negotiate obstacles in the garden. Children develop a very positive attitude to physical exercise. They delight in the challenge of a versatile range of activities, such as using the adventure climbing apparatus in the playground and physical education classes.

Children help themselves to easily accessible drinks of water throughout the day and enjoy fresh fruit as a snack. All meals are well balanced and take account of the individual and cultural needs of all the children. Children are able to talk confidently about 'good' and 'bad' foods at circle time. They are very proud of their vegetable art-work display with samples of fresh vegetables, carrot, beetroot and cabbage. High levels of parental and school involvement in Healthy Eating projects contribute significantly to children's understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Risks of harm to children are unlikely, as the staff are extremely vigilant and uses thorough and highly effective risk assessments. The staff have an excellent understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, and how to involve children effectively in organising their environment. Children have a keen awareness of danger and how to protect themselves from harm.

Children use high quality equipment and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children with special needs will be safe and fully included because of the sensitive adult support and well planned adaptation of resources and activities. The staff have a comprehensive understanding of all safety related issues and have in place all the relevant documentation to ensure children's safety.

Children are very well protected by the staff team who have an excellent understanding of child protection policies and procedures and give top priority to children's welfare. All of these measures greatly contribute to the safety and welfare of the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children have enormous fun and they play enthusiastically with an excellent range of toys and resources, which promote all areas of their learning. The children make excellent progress because the staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self.

Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they are involved in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences, for example, watching the different birds come to the bird table for food and the speed and noise of the windmills on a windy day.

Children are captivated and often inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities relating to their needs. All children are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They listen intently to stories. Children have numerous opportunities to practise their early writing skills when drawing, painting and writing in sand.

The children involve the staff in their play and they receive an abundance of warm, individual attention, which enables them to successfully extend their learning and experiences. Children are very imaginative and inventive. They make sense of the world around them in stimulating indoor and outdoor areas and create exciting individual art work. They are inquisitive, fascinated by the giant snail in the classroom and wonder at the changes they observe to their seeds and bulbs planted in the outdoor area. Children work extremely well together.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are very settled and confident because the staff value and respect their individuality. Their behaviour is exemplary. The staff support children in sharing and turn taking. The Prep School has high expectations and sets consistent boundaries for the children which helps them learn to negotiate well with others and take responsibility for their behaviour. Children's understanding of right and wrong is increased as they respond to gentle reminders to care for their environment, resources and each other.

The children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through organised activities. This positive approach enables the children to develop their social and cultural awareness.

An excellent partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being. Parents views and expectations are actively sought before the child starts at the school. This is further enhanced by home/school diary, regular meetings and newsletters to provide parents with good quality information and improve communication. The school has an open door policy and parents know that they can approach staff at anytime to discuss their child.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the exceptional quality of the organisation of the setting.

The Prep School is extremely well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to maximise play opportunities for children. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well being is in place and regularly reviewed. These are shared regularly with parents to keep them very well informed about the Early Years Department and their child's activities. This contributes to excellent continuity in the children's care.

Children benefit from a highly motivated and extremely skilled staff team, who are committed to continuous improvement and development. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of the care and education they provide. The staff team is very keen to constantly develop knowledge and skills to benefit the children by accessing all training courses offered.

The high quality of the provision means that the Prep School meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not Applicable

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

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

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

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