



## Sacred Heart Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133687
<b>Inspection date</b>	04 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Jill Milton
<b>Setting Address</b>	Sacred Heart Roman Catholic School, Greys Hill, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1SL
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sacred Heart Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Sacred Heart Pre-School in Henley opened in 1977 and is a voluntary group managed by a committee of parents and carers. It operates from designated classrooms in Sacred Heart RC Primary School and serves the local area and beyond.

The pre-school opens on weekdays, during school term times, from 09.00 to 11.45 and 12.45 until 15.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions and there are currently 43 children on roll between the ages of two and half and five years. Of these 30 children receive nursery education funding. The pre-school supports children for whom English is an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven members of staff to work directly with the children and over half the adults have appropriate qualifications in early years. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children experience a good balance between active and restful activities during the day. They enjoy their regular times outdoors where they benefit from exercise in the school grounds. They develop skills like co-ordination and balance as they use equipment, such as scooters or bicycles. Many of them are adept at steering and manoeuvring these toys without colliding into each other. Staff point out to children the effects of exercise suggesting, for example, that they may need to run around on a cold morning.

Children eat a good variety of nutritious snacks, with alternatives like dried bananas, peach or apple. They come to the café style eating area when they feel they need refreshment and they are keen to use the new dispenser to obtain fresh drinking water. Staff sit with the children whilst they eat and little extra touches like a cloth on the table help to make 'tuck time' into a sociable occasion.

Staff obtain essential information from parents about children's health issues, though they do not gain parental permission for emergency medical treatment. They do ensure that the environment where children play is clean and they consistently work through the day to maintain hygiene standards. Children are familiar with hand washing routines and they know that this is necessary 'to keep germs off our food'. Staff prepare to attend to children's accidents by refreshing their first aid training. However, the procedures and documentation in place when staff administer medicines to children do not follow suggested good practice.

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

The provision is good.

Children play in a visually stimulating environment which staff decorate with colourful displays and posters. The children have ample space to move freely, benefiting from the use of shared areas with the reception class of the school. The environment is warm with natural light and ventilation so that children play comfortably. The children use a broad range of interesting resources that cover all the areas of development. The equipment is of good quality and children experience using different natural materials in their play.

Children play safely at pre-school and they are developing awareness of the issues themselves, as they line up to go outside or use scissors carefully. The staff pay good attention to maintaining a safe environment and they conduct visual risk assessments of play areas each day. Staff monitor access to the pre-school rooms and they record when someone different is collecting a child. The procedures linked to keeping children safe work effectively and this includes the area of child protection. Staff have a high regard for safeguarding children and they have a strong knowledge base of how to address concerns. They are aware of the necessity to protect children when helpers such as work experience students, who may not have checks, are present in the setting.

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

The provision is good.

Children are spending busy and enjoyable sessions at the pre-school. The staff have a good awareness of their needs and are helping the children to develop positive attitudes to learning. Staff introduce new children to everyone and explain the daily routine to help them feel secure. Although staff are not making use of the Birth to three matters, which is a framework for those working with children under three years, they do ensure the youngest members of the group are integrating fully. Children remaining for the whole day in the setting benefit from fresh activities in the afternoon session. This refreshes their interest and children are rarely unoccupied.

### **Nursery Education**

The children attending are making good progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in each of the six areas of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is good.

The children are developing a friendly rapport with the approachable staff and they settle well when their parents and carers leave. Children often choose to be near others in their play and they interact well in small group work. The staff are particularly good at these times in engaging in conversations with the children and encouraging them to express their ideas and opinions. This interest shown by the adults helps to boost the children's self-esteem and confidence in talking. Children select areas to play in and they look after their own belongings by placing them in a named tray.

Children are having fun with letter sounds and join in eagerly with 'Jolly Phonics' songs. They are quick to recognise letter shapes and identify objects from collections beginning with the same letter sound. The children listen attentively to stories and at sharing time in a large group. They let others take a turn in speaking and they respond well to staff direction. Timely reminders from staff about a change in activity helps them prepare for new activities. The children have regular access to mark making activities though current role-play lacks sufficient materials to encourage early writing. There is not a lot of evidence on display of children's first efforts at mark making.

Children are gaining a good understanding of many mathematical concepts through their play. They experiment with volume and capacity for example, when filling different containers with coloured dry rice. Staff introduce new vocabulary at circle time to help the children understand words like 'more than' or 'altogether' and children confidently count those present each session. The setting has a good range of resources to introduce shape, pattern making and counting. Children are enthusiastic about exploring and handling natural objects such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Staff help them to talk about ideas such as growth or the seasons and there are some interesting low-level displays for the children on current topics. Children use the computer regularly and are familiar with a range of suitable software. Their use of the computer mouse is one of many opportunities the children are engaging in to increase their dexterity and co-ordination.

Children frequently use their senses to explore textures and materials. They not only use sand and water in their play but have more unusual activities such as printing with pieces of fig, onion and parsnip. They express their own ideas using dressing-up clothes and when building with wooden blocks. A fire engine turns into a vehicle for transporting cars at the hands of an inventive three year old. Children are enjoying music and song at this setting and staff make good use of movement with sound to engage the children's interest successfully. A 'monster stomp' and a 'How do you do?' song are popular items in the daily routine.

Staff have a strong understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and they base their plans on the six areas of learning. They are aware of the needs of the children and provide a good emphasis on creating an environment that supports learning through play. Staff are starting to share the planning of teaching with school staff in order to create consistency and shared goals for the children. The staff have a basic developmental chart for each child where they record progress. Although this new system does need time to develop there are currently no other records kept of achievement, such as examples of drawings or photographs which may provide staff with a fuller picture of each child. The staff do know each of the children well and they definitely meet their growing needs although there is no formal planning of the next steps in learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children play happily in the secure and friendly group and newcomers receive a warm welcome. They frequently interact with the caring staff who share conversations about their families and their likes and dislikes. The staff make effective use of sheets called 'Getting to know you' which provide parents a way to share key issues about their child so that staff can meet their individual needs. The setting has good links with the primary school so that children share some group activities, such as practising autumn songs. This helps the children to feel confident when the time comes for a move up to school for those remaining at this site. Children learn to value others with different backgrounds and beliefs. They celebrate a good range of festivals during the year and photographs reveal an interesting range of activities to develop the children's knowledge of the wider world. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is fostered.

Staff provide good support to children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The manager of the group has attended all levels of available training and is familiar with working alongside other professionals. Children for whom English is an additional language also receive good overall support from the staff. Children and staff interact with a mixture of visual clues and some key words in dual languages. Predictable routines help the children settle and enjoy the day. Children behave well overall and staff manage their range of behaviours effectively. Situations requiring adult intervention are dealt with quickly and consistently so that children learn the difference between right and wrong. They contribute to some ideas for group behaviour called the 'Golden Rules' and they are learning to share and take turns.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Families speak very positively about the care their children receive and many are happy to use the setting for second and third children or to travel from beyond the local area. Parents have access to an extensive range of information

in the entrance lobby and staff ensure regular newsletters and the latest policy documents are to hand. Parents appreciate the display of educational information, for example the current letter of the week, so that they can be involved at home in their children's learning. Staff make themselves available to talk to parents at the end of each session and they provide new parents with reassurance that their children have enjoyed the day.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

This is a well organised setting where children enjoy coming to play and learn. The staff team work effectively together and share in tasks throughout the day, for example taking turns to read stories or lead group times. The staff are caring towards the children and they create a stimulating environment inside the setting. Staff welcome in newcomers and the exciting range of activities prompts many looks of wonderment from the youngest children. The use of time, space and staff deployment contribute to children's health, safety and well being. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management are good. The team of staff benefit from the enthusiasm of the manager who plays an active role in developing the pre-school. He motivates both children and adults and brings to the setting ideas gleaned from current undergraduate studies. Staff meet on a regular basis and most evaluation of their practice is by informal conversations. The new systems for conducting staff appraisals and identifying future needs of individuals and the group are not yet operational. Overall there is a good understanding of the documentation required to run a successful pre-school and improvements undertaken by the manager and chair person help in this area. The current committee is clear about the need to obtain checks for those associated with the group in order to safeguard children.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting was required to address two recommendations and they have made good progress in both areas. Staff now make effective use of resources and activities to promote the children's awareness of different cultures and beliefs. Children learn about festivals like Chinese New Year when they engage in practical enjoyable activities like making masks or ribbon dancing. Staff now ensure that all records relating to day care are accessible on the premises and available for inspection. This aids them in their work in providing good quality day care for children.

At the last inspection for nursery education the setting was required to address two key issues relating to some aspects of learning and planning. The new staff team feel that they have developed better skills in encouraging children to think and conversations frequently took place during the inspection day when this happened. The children are involved in simple

mathematical tasks in everyday situations though not engaging in a lot of mark making necessarily and this issue remains for some attention.

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. 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**

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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):

- improve the procedure to record the administration of medicines and request parental permission to obtain emergency medical treatment of children
- implement the appraisal system for staff to more clearly identify future training needs for the group and for individuals

#### **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):

- extend the opportunities for children to use early mark making and writing in their play
- extend the record keeping of children's achievements and use the information to more effectively plan their next steps in learning.

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