



# Upton St Mary's Pre-school Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	306495
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Elaine Murray
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Church Halls, Church Road, Upton, Wirral, CH49 6JZ
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Mary's Pre School Playgroup Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 satisfactory. 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?

Upton St Mary's Pre-School Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup and members of the church and local community. The group opened in 1970 and operates from the two church halls of St Mary's church in Upton, Wirral. A maximum of 35 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group is open four days a week, excluding Thursday, during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 12.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 35 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll, of whom 13 are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide area.

The playgroup employs nine staff. Five staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children clearly enjoy participating in the wide range of physical activities provided. Staff make use of the spacious indoor facilities to give children chances to enjoy exercise when the weather is unsuitable for outdoor play. Children enjoy climbing using the climbing frame, and show a good awareness of space as they negotiate the indoor space using wheeled toys. Children confidently jump, hop and enthusiastically join in action rhymes.

Children show some awareness of simple hygiene procedures as they routinely wash their hands after using the toilet. However, they are not encouraged to wash their hands before eating snacks. Staff follow hygienic procedures as they clean surfaces and equipment, helping to protect children from the spread of germs. The playgroup's clear sickness policy is shared with parents and helps to protect children from the spread of infection. Several staff have up to date first aid training, helping to meet children's needs in the event of an accident or emergency. Children's health is protected as appropriate procedures are in place to care for children in the event of illnesses, accidents and emergencies.

Children learn about healthy eating as staff provide some healthy and nutritious snacks. Children know to ask for a drink of water when they are thirsty. A jug of water and cups are always available in the main room. This helps to promote children's good health.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an appropriately welcoming environment. A broad range of toys and equipment are visible and accessible to children when they arrive at playgroup. There is also a display table made up of items related to the current topic of 'pets' and the colour brown, this is provided by both staff and children. This helps to foster children's sense of security and belonging. Space is appropriately used as areas are provided for different purposes, for example, for children to be involved in physical play, look at books or be involved in activities. The range of toys and equipment are suitable for different ages and abilities, meeting children's needs appropriately.

Staff take measures to ensure children's safety. For example, they conduct a daily safety check of the premises. Written risk assessments were not available at inspection. Children learn to protect themselves in the event of a fire or emergency as they regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure. They learn to keep themselves safe as staff talk with them about why they must not run in playgroup.

Children are protected as staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and hold relevant contact numbers. However, the full child protection policy was not available for inspection.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are content and secure and have positive relationships with staff. Staff work positively to settle new children to the group. For example, they provide individual attention and involve new children in activities, such as sharing books. Children enjoy activities and are involved in the range provided, which promotes their all round development. Children have some chances to explore and investigate using their senses as they play with sand and take part in free painting activities. Staff do not make use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to inform their planning and practice. At times this means that children have limited chances to learn through sensory play or to express their creativity. Children develop language skills as staff talk to them appropriately, encouraging them to express themselves clearly.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and this is reflected in their teaching. They plan a variety of topic based activities, which promotes some effective learning. Staff question children to encourage them to think. For example, children are asked questions to check their understanding of a story and to prompt them to think what may happen next. They provide good support for children in completing planned activities. Older and more able children are sometimes grouped together in order to cater for their needs, for example, at story time. Staff generally adapt activities to cater for different abilities. However, at times, children are involved in very adult-directed art activities. For example, they make cats from pre-cut shapes onto which staff put the glue and direct children to attach pieces in a particular place. This limits children's creative learning and does not provide challenges for more able children. Staff establish children's starting points when they join the playgroup. They assess children's progress in all areas of learning and use this information to inform planning.

Children cooperate well and show imagination in role play, sharing resources and making meals for each other. They are confident to select their own activities from the range available. Children learn to express their ideas clearly as they talk to staff and each other. They enjoy listening to stories and choose books to look at independently. Children happily use the writing area to draw and make marks. Children confidently count how many children are on the carpet. They enthusiastically take part in number rhymes. They are encouraged to develop ideas of simple addition as they think how many fingers they have if there are two on one hand and one on the other. Children learn to observe change as they discuss the weather on a daily basis. They learn to make models using different materials, such as construction sets and play dough. Children show growing confidence as they operate tape recorders and table top electronic toys. Older and more able children learn to use programmable toys, such as a floor robot. Children are developing pencil control and show proficiency using play dough cutters.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are included in the activities provided and individual needs are well met. This helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem. Children develop an awareness of diversity and

the wider community through a generally good selection of resources and activities that promote positive images. For example, children make Diwali biscuits, and are involved in activities relating to Chinese New Year and Harvest Festival.

Children generally behave well due to staff's positive and consistent approach. Staff praise children for their efforts and achievements. Unwanted behaviour is dealt with sensitively and in a manner appropriate to the child's age and stage of development. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive helpful information about the setting and children's learning. The parents brochure contains information about the six areas of learning and a display of photographs in the main room gives further information. Parents also receive regular newsletters giving details of planned topics. They have regular chances to be informed about their child's progress as they are invited into the playgroup to see their assessment profiles and work. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning by contributing items for topics and being invited to develop aspects of learning at home.

Staff request detailed information from parents about children's abilities and preferences. This information is used appropriately to meet children's needs. A regular sharing of information between the childminder and parents through informal talks also helps to ensure that children's needs are met.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an appropriately organised environment. Positive staff ratios ensure that children receive a suitable level of attention and support. Space and resources are soundly organised to promote children's safety, care and learning. Clear appointment and induction procedures help to ensure that children are cared for by suitable staff. The required records, policies and procedures are in place and contribute to positive outcomes for children. However, some records and policies were not available at inspection.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager provides positive direction and staff work well together to promote children's learning. Staff effectively monitor and evaluate planning, ensuring that children receive a balanced range of experiences. The manager has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and is committed to improvement.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the setting was required to: provide more healthy and nutritious snacks, improve methods for the recording of accidents; improve staff awareness of how to develop children's learning about technology and develop methods of monitoring planning.

These recommendations have been met with positive effect on children's safety, welfare and learning.

### **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**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. 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):

- ensure that children are familiar with hygienic procedures, such as hand washing before eating snacks
- make use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to inform planning and practice
- ensure that records are available for inspection.

#### **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):

- provide consistent chances for children to express their own ideas in creative work
- ensure that activities are consistently adapted to provide challenge for older and more able children.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)