



## Christ Church Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	314600
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Elizabeth Patricia Edmond
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<b>Registered person</b>	Christ Church Community Services Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care, Crèche

## 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?

Christ Church Pre-School opened in 2000. It is voluntary run provision managed by a governing body made up of community and church members. The provision comprises a pre-school session which runs from 09.00 until 11.30 and from 12.30 until 15.00, term time only. There is also a crèche, which operates as and when required throughout the year. This is dependent on other activities for adults which run on the premises.

Both the pre-school and the crèche operate in purpose-built and converted ground floor premises. Other groups also use the pre-school facilities, for example in the evenings or in the holidays. The pre-school has access to its own enclosed outdoor area.

There are currently 75 children on the pre-school register who attend part time and 45 children on roll at the crèche. The pre-school is registered with the local education authority to provide

funded nursery education to those children of eligible age. There are currently 51 children who receive such funding. A small number of children with learning difficulties are supported. The group receives support from the local education authority in respect of the educational provision.

There are 14 paid staff who work with the children; most staff have relevant childcare qualifications at Levels 3 and 2. The group also has regular volunteers and students who offer additional assistance to the staff.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, clean environment where they learn to manage their personal hygiene needs independently. The older children know how to wash their hands ready for snack and proudly demonstrate how to use the paper towels. They often remember to put their hands over their mouths when they cough and confidently help themselves to tissues for their noses as they play.

The children have access to good sized outdoor area which means they can develop their physical skills in better weather. The pre-school children develop their physical skills and strength appropriately as they pedal the bikes and push the scooters with increasing skill and accuracy. There is always some aspect of physical development indoors each day too; the children have fun on the rocker or wheeled toys and younger children enjoy the slide. Some staff encourage the children to notice how their bodies change when they have been active. The children attending the crèche do not often access outdoor play.

The children enjoy the basic snack provided; they learn about where their milk comes from and how it helps them to grow. However, routines for snack in the pre-school do not promote self-help skills as the jugs are too heavy for them to pour their own drinks successfully. Children in the crèche are reminded to help themselves to the water dispenser freely; this ensures that they do not become dehydrated as they play. A jug of water is also available throughout the pre-school play session and staff pour this for the children if they ask.

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

The provision is good.

The children can play freely and safely because the accommodation is sensibly risk assessed and the play equipment and furniture is in good, safe condition. Fire drills are practised regularly which means that the children learn how to exit the building in an emergency. Similarly, the staff remind the children to take turns, for example, on the trampoline, and this means that the children learn the necessary skills to keep themselves safe without their play being inhibited. All the necessary safety equipment is in place to protect the youngest children and building security is very good.

The children are well protected because all the necessary guidance is kept to hand in the office and line management procedures are sound. Key staff have attended some child protection

training and less experienced staff are very clear about who they would talk to about any concerns. Arrangements put in place to safeguard children are shared as appropriate.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

In all areas of the setting, the children arrive happily and eagerly due to the warm welcome offered by the staff and they look forward to the range of activities. The effective settling in policy and key-working system in the crèche support the young children's emotional needs very well because of the wonderfully calm environment this creates. The young children in the crèche concentrate for extended periods at their chosen activity and become skilful communicators as they chat with the staff about their play dough shapes or the colours of their bricks. Their language skills are further promoted as they snuggle onto their key-worker's lap for a story. They also confidently move the resources around the room freely in order to extend their play and learning, for example, by taking a pan of sand to the role play area so that they can fully act out familiar experiences. This ensures that they become competent learners because they have time to fully develop their own thoughts and ideas through their play.

The younger pre-school children, similarly, absorb themselves fully in their learning and development. They help themselves to the role play items and often choose to play in the book corner with them. They share books with their dolls and they picnic around the bookshelves; the more able children begin to introduce an element of imagination into their role play. They develop their understanding of size, shape and capacity as they experiment with the sand and water and some spend considerable time expressing themselves in their free painting. However, adults are sometimes overly directive in relation to some of the children's art work which results in the children's creativity being hindered and the pictures looking the same. This is not fully valuing what the children have to offer.

At times there is a very positive emphasis on developing the children's self help skills. They are praised warmly when they have managed to put on their own coats, completed a jigsaw or fastened the construction pieces together. The children beam with pride and are motivated to have another go and this has a positive impact on their learning and development. However, routines for snack in the pre-school do not promote self-help skills. They spend time waiting for drinks to be served and then for the others to be finished before they can get back to their play and learning.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pre-school operates in different groups and under different leaders. Whilst initial curriculum planning is shared, the delivery or presentation is sometimes different. For example, a joint decision to focus on communication, language and literacy may result in one group focusing on pre-writing skills and another may offer this in an adult-led drama session. The group are currently working with the local authority on a more appropriate, observation-led system for assessing the children's learning.

The children have fun in the period of free play, they are enthusiastic and motivated to take part in the range of activities which address all areas of learning in some way. They enjoy making

shapes with the play dough and staff often skilfully support the children's learning by chatting to them about the shapes they are making. Similarly, the staff offer additional vocabulary to the children who are playing in the water to discuss the melting ice. This session encourages the children to be confident, self-motivated learners in the indoor environment. However this period of activity is too short; there is not always enough time for children to fully extend their own thoughts and ideas.

Plans show that staff have a satisfactory understanding of the early learning goals and how children progress through the stepping stones. Adult-led activities which address this to a certain degree are accordingly set up. However, staff do not fully understand the principles of the Foundation Stage, in particular, that activities need to address the different starting points from which children develop their learning, and that children have different learning styles, thus building on what they already know and can do. This is because staff expect all the children to sit and take part in the same activity at the same time. For example, when the whole class are required to sit and trace their names, the youngest children are bored because the activity is inappropriate and the more able children are bored because they have completed the task and must wait until the others have finished. This has a negative impact on the children's morale and therefore their behaviour. Although the skills mastered in these whole group activities are sometimes useful for some children, they are learnt in isolation and not put into appropriate context for children. So, although some children can form letters very well, there is no encouragement for children to enjoy writing for purpose, for example, to label their own work or to write shopping lists in the home corner. Similarly, a whole group activity to plant a seed in a pot enables the children to learn about how plants need water and sunshine and they talk very confidently about this. But time spent waiting for staff to give out the pots, soil and seeds, then the time waiting for an adult to help them to hold the watering can, and for everyone to be finished is not conducive to the children's motivation levels. At the same time, there is no gardening equipment such as trowels, wheelbarrows, plant pots or gardening books in the garden for the children to enjoy and experiment with digging, planting, watering and harvesting for themselves, because the outdoor classroom is not effectively included in the curriculum plans.

The children are very happy and settled in the pre-school environment and sometimes they demonstrate a confidence in their independent learning. They enjoy books and stories and sometimes seek out a favourite book in relation to their role play; they are sometimes fully absorbed in their favourite story until the period of free play and learning is over. The children begin to learn about print carrying meaning, for example, they find their name cards for self-registration. The children also learn to count very well and they recognise familiar numbers when they are pointed out at group time, but there are limited numerals in the environment and so children do not consolidate this learning in their play. The children learn to use a variety of construction kits and are sometimes quite imaginative in their designs.

The children begin to learn about the world around them. They learn about how plants grow and how chickens are hatched. They examine changes as the blocks of ice melt in the water tray and learn the appropriate language to discuss their findings. However, there are many missed opportunities for self-initiated investigation and exploration because the garden is used mainly for physical play. The children begin to use information technology to support their

learning and they handle the computer mouse increasingly well during the short free-play session. They also confidently ask for help when the computer has temporarily 'gone wrong'.

There are significant weaknesses in the provision of creative activities as there is no designated art and craft area for the children to access freely. Sometimes the children engage in free painting or drawing, but more often this is overly adult-directed. Adults advise the children which colours to use and adults cut the shapes out for collage work; they have very low expectations of what children can achieve for themselves. The children enthusiastically engage in role play and act out well-known stories using their favourite books and a good range of props. The children sing an increasing range of songs from memory and join in enthusiastically with the adult's guitar. There is a good range of percussion instruments and the children enjoy these as part of an adult-led activity.

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

The provision is good.

The children are truly respected as individuals because the staff get to know them and their families very well. This develops the children's self-esteem and helps them to feel settled and valued. The children learn songs which encourage them to welcome their friends and share with them; even the youngest children join in enthusiastically. This focuses the children on the needs of others and consequently they learn to take turns and share easily and happily. The children's behaviour during their periods of free play is exceptionally good and they show a high level of care and concern for their friends; they help each other with the computer games, apologise freely for accidental bumps and they share the play dough out with the minimum of adult help. Expected toddler behaviour is handled with great patience, understanding and professionalism. Children with disabilities and learning difficulties are sensitively supported and effective liaison with various professionals and parents ensures a coordinated approach.

There is a clear emphasis at the setting on Christianity and children say a prayer at the beginning of the day and learn to say grace before their snack. There also is a range of positive images of others around the nursery which helps the children to accept and appreciate diversity. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The relationships are very strong, as parents receive clear information about the setting and how it operates, and there is a good range of information on other childcare issues in the hall for them to access. Close links with other organisations and projects within the church promote warm and trusting three-way relationships between staff, parents and their children; these positive relationships transfer into the crèche and pre-school and further promote the happy, settled environment. For example, the children are confident and relaxed as they see their significant adults chat about the children's needs or their own training courses. There is written information for parents about the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning and they are pleased with their children's progress in relation to this. Parents are very supportive of the high level of care and support given to their children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff are enthusiastic in their work with the children and some continue to update their training and qualifications. This means that when staff are on leave, the qualifications level meets minimum standards in the pre-school. The crèche and the pre-school operate independently, with separate management structures, however, the level of mutual support means that cover can be provided when there are temporary gaps in pre-school staff's training and qualifications, such as first aid. The children are settled and happy in the childcare environment and they follow the regular routines obligingly and confidently. However, these routines are often intrusive as they interrupt the children's play and learning.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. Whilst there is no formalised system for evaluating the educational provision, the group are happy with the regular visits from the local educational authority and often welcome their advice. The local authority advises on supporting children with individual needs and are helping to revise the system for assessing the children's learning. Management have a positive attitude to the inspection process and they support staff on how to address recommendations raised as part of the inspection process. Management discuss future improvements articulately and with interest. However, there have been minimal improvements in the nursery education provided since the last inspection.

All aspects of documentation are clear, comprehensive and very well organised; this includes the children's details and related records as well as advice and guidance from the local authority and other bodies. Indeed, there is a very professional approach to administrative duties. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

Care.

At the last inspection three recommendations were raised. The group was asked to extend the child protection procedures to include allegations against staff and volunteers, further develop the complaints procedure and ensure that parents sign medication records. In conjunction with the committee, the group has now implemented all the changes suggested and the particular aspects of documentation are clear and very well organised.

Nursery Education.

At the last inspection of the funded nursery education the group was asked to develop the planning and assessment systems. This is currently under review and the local education authority are working with staff on more appropriate systems using ongoing observations.

The staff were asked to ensure that the organisation of the session offered children opportunities to extend their learning experiences. The daily routines still inhibit children's individual learning experiences and remains an area for improvement.

The group were asked also to develop the outdoor area to promote children's understanding of the natural world. There are now the beginnings of a garden area but this is not used by children as there is no equipment freely available. This remains an area for improvement.

The setting was also asked to provide and extend resources and opportunities for children to develop their creative ideas and skills. There is no art and craft area for the children to access freely and this remains an area of significant weakness.

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

Since 1 April 2004 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 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 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 the children have free access to a broad range of creative resources where they can express their own thoughts and develop their own ideas (also applies to nursery education)
- revise the daily routine for drinks and snack so that children increase their independent skills.

#### **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):

- revisit the principles of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and ensure that the children's individual learning needs are addressed so that they can build on what they already know and can do, as they play
- revisit the principles of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and ensure there are purposeful play and learning activities both indoors and outdoors for most of the session.



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)