



Our Lady of the Wayside Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	250105
Inspection date	30 January 2007
Inspector	Diane Ashplant
Setting Address	566 Stratford Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands, B90 4AY
Telephone number	0121 745 2799
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Registered person	Our Lady of the Wayside Pre-School 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.

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?

Our Lady of the Wayside Pre-School opened in 1993 and is managed by a voluntary committee. It operates from the church hall premises at Our Lady of the Wayside Church which is situated off the Stratford Road in Shirley, Solihull. The group has the use of two halls with kitchen and toilet facilities. All children share access to a securely enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 during term time only.

There are currently 52 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 26 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding area. The setting currently supports children with special needs.

There are nine full and part-time staff who work with the children. Of these, over half hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is well promoted through daily opportunities for physical play both inside and outside. The imaginative extension of the outdoor area with a covered section provides children with almost limitless access to a fresh air environment where they can enjoy a range of play experiences and exercise their bodies. They also engage in different music and movement sessions inside which encourages the development of physical skills and co-ordination. Staff carry out good cleaning routines to maintain children's health and children themselves are learning the importance of promoting their health through everyday routines. This means they recognise the need to wash their hands after using the toilet or messy play activities and some independently take tissues to blow their noses. This awareness is re-enforced through discussion with staff and topic-based activities which means that children role playing in the 'veterinary surgery' know instinctively to wash their hands. Children's health is well protected in the event of an accident or illness as many staff hold a current first aid certificate and several have attended further training, for example, in the use of epi-pens. All routines for the recording of accidents and medication are thoroughly carried out and any specific health needs are well addressed to ensure children's health.

Children have a range of nutritious snacks such as raw vegetables to promote their health and the importance of a balanced diet is regularly incorporated by staff into discussions and activities they share with the children. Children are beginning to respond to the café style snack table which means they can choose when they want to eat and drink, although the staff are always there to encourage those less independent. Children have a choice of water or milk and some are developing independent skills as they help pour out drinks, butter their own crackers and then tidy away afterwards. Children's individual dietary needs are well known and displayed so that all staff know clearly how to safeguard children's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have access to good space both inside and out where they can move around confidently as staff are generally aware of any potential dangers and have taken all necessary precautions to protect children from these. A daily risk assessment further heightens this awareness and staff recognise this is particularly important in premises which are shared by other groups. Due to the organisation of the group and the free-flow of children between activities both inside and outside staff understand the importance of appropriate supervision and in most cases perform this role well. Children are beginning to develop their own awareness of safety through discussion and activities which include visits from people such as the crossing lady. Children are learning the guidelines which are there to protect them and so readily respond to the staff when they ask them, for example, how they move safely between rooms. This also means they

can choose to play independently. Resources and equipment are carefully selected and chosen with regard to safety and suitability. These are set out so children can access them easily and are reviewed if any element of risk is identified, such as the hazard of slipping with the jelly play activity. All appropriate safety policies and procedures are in place such as regular fire drills, and routines such as arrival time where a member of staff stands at the door to individually welcome children and chains the door between each visit, are rigorously carried out to ensure children's safety.

Children's welfare is well safeguarded through the staff's awareness of their role and responsibilities as regards child protection and their understanding of how to pass on concerns appropriately. This is shared effectively with parents. The importance of staff's knowledge in this area is clearly understood and forms an important part of the induction of new staff and the on-going development of all other staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children at this pre-school benefit greatly from the time they spend here. They positively engage in a very well-planned and interesting programme which provides them with an excellent range of experiences to explore and learn from. All staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and genuinely enjoy their time together. They are attentive and responsive to the children and are able to support them in their activities through the effective use of encouragement, comments and questions. They interact spontaneously with the children and provide enthusiastic role models as they aid and challenge them, allowing them to choose how they spend their time both in independent play and more adult-led sessions. Children understand the daily routines well which means they line up when asked, help tidy up and participate actively in the group sessions. The space is very well set out with a full range of resources covering all areas of learning and supporting the different areas of opportunity. The well-developed outdoor area provides additional challenges and rich experiences so creating a continuous learning environment for children to enjoy. The programme is well designed around themes and topics which staff integrate skilfully into the daily session which helps to re-enforce children's learning through play. For example, they explore the theme of pets through creative activities, role play and regular discussions about how to care and feed them, and also enjoy meeting some animals who come to visit. The regular evaluation of the focus activities enables staff to assess their success in engaging and extending children. All children's progress is routinely monitored to identify how they are developing and this is shared very effectively with parents. Children at this pre-school make very good relationships with staff who are committed to providing an exciting and stimulating environment with a wide range of well planned experiences which make learning fun and accessible to all.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and have created a well planned and interesting programme to help stimulate and support children's development, which also allows them the flexibility to make their own choices. The daily programme provides a suitable balance between free and more adult-led activities enabling children to play and develop independently, with staff ready to engage and encourage as

necessary. The learning environment is bright and attractive and offers children many creative and interesting experiences, both indoors and outside. Consequently, children enjoy chalking and water painting on the walls outside, learn about nature as they dig in the soil and watch birds feed at the table or develop their mathematical understanding by finding numbers in the sand. The effective use of topic-based activities and weekly themes provides links to the children's learning. Staff remind children what they have done and clearly explain what they are going to do and so re-enforce their learning. There is a planned programme across all areas of learning which is regularly evaluated to ensure its suitability. Staff use assessments effectively to monitor children's progress such as the tracker system to plot their initial play patterns and then spontaneous and planned evaluations afterwards to ensure they are making progress. These are used to help formulate their report which covers all aspects of development and is shared with parents. However, although staff understand their key children well, the planning does not clearly identify the next steps in children's learning or differentiate between the abilities of individual children.

Children are interested and engaged and are generally well supported as they use their initiative to benefit from the wide range of experiences available. Some prefer to be outside where they are still able to participate in a selection of exciting play and learning opportunities. Children are able to concentrate on chosen tasks for some time and respond positively to suggestions to extend their play. Most children listen attentively at story times and engage enthusiastically in remembered songs and rhymes and some are beginning to show an independent interest and respect for books. Children are learning to make marks and write for different purposes as they make shopping lists or write prescriptions at the vets. They are beginning to recognise their own names as they self register and select their own snack mat and to identify sounds in letters. Children are confident talkers as they share experiences at group time or engage in imaginary conversations with friends in the role play corner. Children have regular opportunities to learn about numbers through counting songs and rhymes or matching games. Older ones develop their skills by calculating, for example, how many eggs are left in the nest when some are taken out. They identify shapes and patterns as they make puzzles and construct the same colour tower of lego. Children have many opportunities to express themselves and be creative through exploring an exciting range of different materials such as jelly and gloop and making pictures from straw and rabbit food. They become totally immersed as they mirror adult roles and express themselves through imaginary play. They develop their senses through tasting different fruit and identifying textured items in the feely bag or examine and play different musical instruments. Children learn about their local community through visitors such as the fireman and the hairdresser and share their own experiences which helps them develop their sense of identity. They learn about different cultures as they celebrate festivals like St Patrick's Day and Chinese New Year and visit the local church. Children are happy and sociable and developing their independence as they freely access resources and activities. They are cultivating a respect for each other as they help those less confident and share in small tasks like tidying up.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are very warmly received into this setting by staff who are open and responsive and get to know them very well. The key worker system operates very effectively to ensure each child's individual needs are clearly understood which helps them settle in and feel valued. Children have excellent choices as they decide on where and how they play and have access to a wide range of resources which includes a good selection of positive images. They learn about their local community in interesting ways such as listening to visitors like the fireman, meeting a variety of different pets brought in by parents such as ferrets and touring the local church. They develop a positive and balanced view the wider world through discussions and activities around different cultures which involves trying different foods and wearing different clothes. Staff have a genuine commitment to equality of opportunity which means children with special needs are very well supported at this setting. Staff are very sensitive and caring and know how best to include each child while still prioritising their happiness and comfort. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to enable each child to achieve their full potential and are pro-active in raising concerns which may impede a child's development.

Children thrive in this positive environment where they receive regular praise from staff for their efforts such as when they help tidy up or for the 'beautiful work' they do. This helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Children respond well to the guidelines in place such as the tambourine calling for their immediate attention and are developing independent skills as they decide when to have their snacks. They are able to confidently initiate their own play choices and play well on their own or in small groups, happily talking to the friends and the staff. Behaviour is generally good and children are learning to show respect for each other as they are encouraged to take care of those who are new to the group. Any disputes are calmly yet clearly managed by staff who provide excellent role models so that children understand the consequences of their actions and how to play harmoniously. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff form excellent relationships with parents as they ensure they are fully involved in their child's time at pre-school through many different ways. All parents are welcomed in a very open and friendly manner and each key worker makes sure that both child and parent settle in easily and take whatever time they need, realising that this is an important step for all. Parents are fully informed about the pre-school through all the necessary documentation which is shared at registration. Parents and staff complete an 'all about me form' which identifies each child's particular likes and needs. Information continues to be shared through attractive and clearly explained displays about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage, included many photographs of their children enjoying a whole range of activities. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time on the parent rota so they can really see what life is like here for their child and are also invited to an Open Day before their child arrives. They continue to be fully involved in their child's learning through daily discussions with the key worker. Parent and child meet together at every important stage and share their pink book of work and discuss their progress and the next steps to be taken. A very well-resourced and organised parent cupboard provides a wealth of information about a whole range of childhood issues.

Partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Parents are superbly supported by all staff who are always available to talk about their children and to share their work with them. They discuss carefully their needs when they start and throughout their time at the pre-school, actively seeking out parents' comments on the child's development and planning their next steps in conjunction with them. This ensures they are fully involved in their child's learning and are effectively able to work together with staff to extend this. The weekly and medium term plans are displayed for them with the links to the early learning goals and the stepping stones. Attractive displays including photographic evidence provide very clear explanations of what the children are achieving and ensure parents are fully aware of the experiences their children are having. The use of very informative newsletters explain the focus theme and activities and the links to the stepping stones which very effectively continues this involvement with the parents. They are also invited to an initial and mid-term review when they discuss their child's progress report and agree an action plan for moving the child on. Staff clearly recognise the essential role parents play in their children's learning, fully involve them and listen to and act on their suggestions. This means they both work very successfully together to encourage each child to achieve their full potential and also to celebrate their success.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are part of a well-established and well-organised pre-school and enter enthusiastically into the setting where the daily programme offers them a full range of interesting and exciting opportunities. The children have good space to move around in and can independently access resources and activities which interest them, deciding where and how to spend their time. The development of the outdoor area has created another total learning environment and children move with confidence between the two. Every session is well planned to provide a wide variety of experiences which are supported by an extensive range of play and learning resources. The staff work very well together and form a committed and enthusiastic team who all interact and respond well to the children so they feel valued and cared for. There are good systems in place to provide effective channels of communication, such as regular staff meetings, memos and record books. There are sound selection and recruitment procedures to ensure those who work with the children are suitable to do so and a thorough induction procedure including in-house training supports new staff well. Staff development is encouraged through the appraisal system and evidenced by a good commitment to additional training. Activities are regularly evaluated and the use of peer-on-peer observations gives staff the opportunity to monitor each other and make suggestions for individual practice. The use of the key worker system and the delegation of certain roles and responsibilities means that all staff have a positive input into the planning and organisation of the group and get to know the children well. However, their deployment and involvement in certain tasks does sometimes detract from time spent with the children.

All paperwork and record keeping to support the efficient and safe management of the pre-school is in place and the maintenance of this is excellent. It is very well organised, up-to-date and routinely reviewed and evaluated to make sure it is fully effective in achieving the best outcomes for children. All appropriate records are made available to parents so they have a very clear understating of how the group is organised.

The leadership and management for nursery education is good. The manager works closely with her staff team and together they strive to create a pre-school where all children are involved, happy and making progress. The manager and deputy are actively involved within the group which ensures the on-going support and monitoring of both staff and children. The staff form an enthusiastic and committed team who know and include all children well and have established a very good partnership with parents. The staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and have created a stimulating play environment and a well-structured programme covering all areas of learning which is regularly evaluated to ensure it is meeting the outcomes for children in the most effective way. Parents are also regularly asked for their comments on the educational progress of their children which enables staff and parents to work together and to act on any areas identified. There are regular team meetings which all staff attend and where they are encouraged to contribute to the organisation and planning of the provision which means they all feel valued and involved. There are good links with the committee and with the early years services so they work effectively together to encourage all children to enjoy and achieve. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection there were two recommendations set relating to the up-dating of procedures for child protection and complaints. The setting now has in place an appropriate complaints procedure and log and a full child protection procedure, both of which are made available to parents.

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 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):

- ensure that staff are suitably deployed within the setting to maintain the safety, welfare and development of all children

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):

- continue to review and develop the curriculum planning to ensure it links into assessments for individual children and therefore clearly differentiates between more and less 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