

Tilehouse Street Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY274596
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Jo Blackman
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Registered person	Tilehouse Street Baptist Church
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?

Tilehouse Street pre-school opened in 1968 and registered as a committee run group in 2003. It operates from a room within a church building in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday, term time only from 09:15 to 12:00, an afternoon session operates on a Wednesday from 13:00 to 15:00 and a lunch club operates on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 to 13:00. There is currently no outside area in use although children are able to use the church hall for physical activity.

There are currently 50 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local catchment area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs nine members of staff. Of these, seven hold an appropriate early years qualification. The pre-school has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standard certificate.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and comfortable environment. They are beginning to learn about the importance of personal hygiene through regular opportunities for washing their hands, such as before snack time and after craft activities. Their understanding of the relevance of this practice is promoted because staff offer children gentle reminders of why they wash their hands. Clear records are kept of children's health needs, enabling staff to provide good care and they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks, such as bananas and apples, promoting their growth and development. Their special requirements with regard to health and diet are well documented, staff are aware of children's special requirements at each snack time and children drinking milk sit separate to those drinking water, therefore, children are protected and their individual health needs are consistently met.

Children are able to enjoy regular physical activity. Although the pre-school do not have an outside area, very good use is made of the large hall. Children use equipment such as, balls, bikes, climbing apparatus and obstacle courses to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills through an appropriate level of challenge. For example, children take part in a 'bunny hop' fundraising event. Children crawl, climb, roll and bounce, whilst fully supported by staff. Regular opportunities are offered to children for music and movement activities which includes singing action songs, dancing, marching and singing to the sounds of the piano which is played by a member of staff. Children's independence is generally promoted and they are developing an understanding of their own needs, for example, children pour their own drinks at snack time.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into pre-school by friendly staff and are cared for in a bright, stimulating and generally safe environment. Children are supervised and staff generally give priority to the security of the premises by ensuring that two members of staff stay by the main door during arrival and collection times. However, when children leave the room for a different activity or to visit the toilet, staff are not consistent in using the door chain or counting children, therefore, children's safety is affected. The pre-school uses areas effectively and makes good use of the space available. Children have supervised access to a good range of suitable resources which promotes their care, learning and play. Staff ensure that children use working equipment so that the toy can be fully enjoyed. For example, children use electronic telephones, tills and keyboards which are checked regularly and those that are not working are removed and replaced.

Relevant risk assessments are completed on a daily basis enabling staff to minimise hazards to children and promote their safety. The setting has a clear fire evacuation procedure which is displayed and regularly carried out and recorded, therefore, children are familiar with the evacuation drill and have awareness for staying safe. Children's welfare is safeguarded because they are protected by informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. All staff have completed relevant training and it is the manager's and chairperson's responsibility of child protection within the setting, ensuring that all policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and are kept up to date. The written child protection policy includes details of procedures to be followed in

the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and all staff have awareness for protecting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children spend their time purposefully. They are keen to participate in the range of activities and play opportunities provided and are confident in their relationships with each other and staff. Their self-esteem is well promoted through praise and encouragement and very good levels of support from the well established and friendly staff team. Children's work is displayed on the walls, helping them to feel valued, secure and confident within the setting. They show their developing independence as they make choices about their activities. They interact well with staff and are making positive relationships with each other.

Children's learning is promoted because staff make effective use of open questions and suggestions to encourage children to think further. An example of this is at story time. The children listen attentively to a story told by a member of staff about "Jack and the Beanstalk". The staff member uses facial expressions and her voice to tell the story and children join in at different times. For example, when asked what Jack might see as he climbs the beanstalk children say "a castle" and "the giant". The children join in excitedly as the staff member pretends to be the giant, the staff and children say together "Fe fi fo fum". The children show their happy faces and the story is enjoyed. The story is part of the current 'growing' topic and children are learning about the natural world such as how frogspawn become frogs. Children talk with staff about the frogspawn, they are able to watch it grow and have flash cards to see how eventually, it will develop in to frogs.

Careful planning by staff of activities for all age groups ensures that children's learning is well balanced and activities are generally linked to their individual needs and capabilities. Staff have an awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the children benefit from their knowledge and understanding of this. Activities and topics are planned in line with the framework and provide younger children with a range of age appropriate activities and opportunities. Children are encouraged to use their imagination and staff take an active role in their play. For example, children and staff use the home corner together, children make 'cups of tea and cake' for the staff, who praise children's efforts well. Their behaviour is good, they are aware of the boundaries in place and they are fully encouraged to share, take turns and be kind to each other.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of the curriculum. Children are confident in their surroundings, enthusiastically selecting toys and activities from the wide range available. Children's progress is well balanced as key workers keep records of children's progress, collating the information from these to highlight individual strengths and weaknesses and determine future work and activity planning. Staff are able to ensure that all areas of learning are covered within the plans because of comprehensive planning.

Children have good opportunities to develop their attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. They form very good relationships with adults and other children. Their independence is generally promoted as they are encouraged to make choices about the activities they wish to participate in, promoting high levels of confidence. For example, children

are praised by a member of staff during a play dough activity. "you've made some wonderful chocolates there", "they taste lovely". This leads on to talk about 'Mothers Day' and children talk about what they gave their mums the day before. Staff use their experience and knowledge to ensure that children are purposely occupied and are offered challenge in their play, making good use of open questions to extend children's learning. Children have access to labels and pictures around the pre-school, therefore, encouraging children to associate the written word with the picture whilst looking at displays that they have participated in. They have access to books and enjoy sharing stories with staff as well as independently. Children enjoy predicting what happens next in the story and staff are skilled at supporting this. For example, the Jack and the Beanstalk story where children are able to predict what happens next.

Children are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context and confidently using mathematical language in their daily play. For example, during a 'Meccano' building activity, children build a fire engine. The children count wheels, talk about the shape of the pieces they use and which screws are big and small. Therefore, their understanding of mathematical concepts is enhanced as they are consistently offered a range of opportunities. Children have very good opportunities to find out about the natural world through planned themes and topics. They are able to watch and learn about the process involved for a bean seed to grow into a broad bean. They learn about the changing weather, measuring plants and size and a recent topic covered 'mothers and their babies' where children learnt about farm animals and their babies such as, cows and calves.

The children are learning about technology through the use of play phones, keyboards, head phones, electronic laptops and tills. They are developing an awareness for and their gross motor skills are promoted through different forms of movement, such as using ribbons when dancing, making music with different instruments and using static equipment. For example, obstacle courses. They have access to a wide variety of tools to promote their fine motor skills and are increasing their control by using a range of large and small equipment, such as scissors, pens and pouring their own drinks at snack time. However, children have limited opportunities for mark making in everyday activities and therefore, their skills in this area is not further developed.

Children achieve well as a result of clear planning and assessment systems covering most areas of learning and effective teaching methods. Plans show how activities will be adapted to meet the individual needs and abilities to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged. However, more able children are not effectively challenged in every day activities and their independence is not fully encouraged. Staff are clearly aware of their role within an activity and are committed to supporting children's learning in most areas. Staff provide a rich learning environment to engage children's interest and enable them to enjoy their play and learning experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's sense of belonging is fully encouraged, each child has a coat peg, their own name card and there are numerous displays of children's work around the pre-school. Children from the local community are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. They develop their understanding and appreciation of a wide range of diverse cultures through activities that promote a greater awareness. An example of this is the recent Diwali festival. Children made cards and learnt about the different aspects of the culture, in an age appropriate manner. They also have access to an appropriate range of play resources which give them positive images

and information about other cultures and beliefs. These include dolls, posters, books, play figures and dressing-up clothes.

Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they move from one activity to another. Children who have particular requirements have their needs well met, and knowledgeable staff support their learning on a one-to-one basis in this inclusive setting through regular meetings and guidance from outside agencies such as, Health Visitors. The pre-school has a written complaints policy and has a record in place, in the event of a complaint being raised. Details are displayed on the parent notice board, ensuring that parents are familiar with the procedure to be followed should they have a complaint.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff develop a very positive and effective partnership with parents to support children's progress in their learning. Parents value the service provided and are well informed of their children's progress. Staff have built good relationships with parents and communication is fully encouraged by providing regular newsletters, opportunities for parents to discuss their children's development and share relevant information about the children who receive nursery education. There is a range of information which is generally accessible to parents on a notice board which includes general care and educational literature. Children respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. Children's care and welfare is promoted through the staff's practical knowledge and daily implementation of the pre-schools policies and procedures. The pre-school manager has a clear vision for the development of the group and supports her staff very well. For example, she ensures that staff feel valued by working alongside them, promoting a good team spirit and monitoring the daily practice at close hand. The mature and established staff team are well qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. There are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. Children's records are kept up to date and contain all relevant information, they are given to parents regularly so that they can observe the developmental progress of their children and staff provide appropriate care and promote children's welfare at all times.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from a well-managed setting. The manager and staff team are good role models, demonstrating their positive attitudes and enthusiasm for their work. This creates a positive atmosphere within the setting and all staff are motivated, attending additional training and providing opportunities for expressing their own ideas. Staff demonstrate a real affinity with children. They respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Planning and assessment systems are suitable to ensure that children's learning is promoted. There is therefore a positive atmosphere within the setting, enabling children to learn, develop and progress.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school agreed to organise snack time as a social occasion to encourage children to relate well with each other and the staff. The children are grouped together on small tables, with a staff member at each table to help promote the social aspect of snack time, therefore children are encouraged to talk to each other, and this promotes their

social development. The pre-school also agreed to review hand washing measures and provide information to parent helpers on the toileting procedure. Children have opportunities to regularly wash their hands within the main room after craft activities, therefore promoting their health. A policy is in place for parent helpers stating the procedures that they are required to follow whilst helping, the policy includes the procedure that must be followed when children visit the toilet. Therefore, parents are made fully aware of their role.

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 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 security is consistently promoted to improve children's safety (refers to the main pre-school door and during times when activities are operating outside of the main room).

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):

- further develop opportunities for children to improve their mark making skills in every day activities
- provide further challenge and promote independence for more able children in every day activities.

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