

# The Woolmer Green Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY272315
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kelly Eyre
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Michael's Woolmer Green School, London Road, Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire, SG3 6JP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 813267 school
<b>E-mail</b>	admin.woolmergreen@thegrid.org.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	The Woolmer Green Pre School Management Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](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?

Woolmer Green Pre-School is run by a voluntary management committee. It has been open for over thirty years and was re-registered following a re-organisation in July 2003. It operates from a designated classroom within St Michael's Woolmer Green School, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open each weekday during school term time and sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45. There is also a lunch club which runs from 11:45 to 13:00 each day. Additional afternoon sessions are run and these vary according to demand. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school serves a rural community and wider geographical areas such as the surrounding towns. It currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and is able to support children who have disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs five members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

The setting has achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's physical development is well promoted and they are offered a wide range of activities which contribute to the promotion of their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve physical skills such as balance and co-ordination as they climb and swing on the climbing frame, balance and rock on the see-saw, participate in parachute games and jump from one stepping stone to another. Good use is made of the outdoor play area which means that children have daily opportunities for fresh air and vigorous physical activities. They are able to develop finer skills and physical movements through their involvement in activities such as construction where they manipulate small pieces or crafts where they hold scissors, pencils and paint brushes correctly.

Children's health is consistently promoted because staff have a good understanding of this area and promote it daily in all areas. There are good daily hygiene procedures in place to minimise the spread of infection, for example, children wash their hands before snack and lunch time. They are gaining a good understanding of the importance of these practices because staff discuss these with them and they are also involved in regular activities which reinforce their understanding. An example of this is children participating in an activity where they cover their hands in chocolate spread and then find out how difficult it is to wash this away thoroughly, with staff likening this to washing hands thoroughly to wash away the germs. The spread of infection is further minimised because there is a clear policy and guidance regarding the exclusion of children who are unwell. Children's health in an emergency situation is promoted because the majority of staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications.

Children's health and development is further promoted as they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks which include a range of fresh fruit. Their understanding of the relevance of a healthy diet and lifestyle is developed as they participate in topic work covering this. Healthy eating is further promoted as parents are given clear guidance regarding appropriate foods to include in lunch boxes. Snack times are viewed as additional learning opportunities, where children learn valuable social skills as they sit in small groups and help clear away afterwards. However, their independence and understanding are not fully promoted because children do not always serve themselves and are not involved in the preparation of snacks. Allergies and special diets are recorded and staff check these records before offering children any food and when planning activities.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where there are colourful displays of their work and resources are appealingly arranged and easily accessible. Their daily safety is prioritised and staff carry out regular safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to minimise these. This helps to ensure that children are able to play and move around safely, freely and independently. However, children's safety is compromised because they are able to access an unprotected electrical socket in the main play area. The implementation of practical policies and procedures ensures that staff are aware of safety practices and are able to promote children's

safety, for example, there is a clear procedure regarding emergency evacuation and this is practised each term to enable children to become familiar with the routine.

Children are building up their understanding of safety issues and how to keep themselves safe. They are given clear explanations by staff, for example, a member of staff talks with children about why it is important to keep the sand in the sand tray. This area is further reinforced because children have participated in topic work covering issues such as road safety, where they discussed these issues and were involved in relevant role play scenarios. Children have access to a wide range of toys and resources that are appropriate for their size and developmental stages. These are well organised and easily accessible so that children are able to make choices about their play. Children's welfare is well promoted because staff have attended training and have a good understanding of child protection issues. They have ensured that they have up-to-date information regarding current procedures and are able to identify, report and follow up any concerns.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. Their daily care and play experiences are enhanced by staff who are exceptionally caring and show the children how much they genuinely enjoy their company. They know the children very well and remember individual points which are relevant to each child, for example, talking with children about their siblings, their different pets and favourite authors. Children react positively to this caring environment, creating a warm, caring and relaxed atmosphere within the setting, where children play happily and are keen to explore the activities and opportunities offered.

Children are confident and have high self-esteem because they are consistently given appropriate and meaningful praise from staff, for example, a child proudly shows a staff member the numbers she has put in correct sequence, encouraging other children to try this activity. Children's confidence is further promoted because staff ensure that there are always familiar items for them to play with, using these to build up their confidence to explore further. This is illustrated by the role play areas where there are always a range of familiar items in the home corner and these are complimented by additional role play areas such as a 'rain forest', baker's or fruit and vegetable shop. Children's work and photographs are colourfully displayed throughout the setting, promoting their sense of belonging and self-worth. They are able to make choices about their play because all areas are well planned and resources are easily accessible, for example, a young child sits at the writing table and confidently chooses coloured pencils, paper, scissors and an envelope from the storage drawers.

New children settle well and quickly become secure in their relationships with staff because staff make sure that they are aware of all routines and individual needs. Staff make very good use of home visits before children start at the setting, using these to gather information about the child but also to pass on information so that both children and parents are able to feel secure and confident. Excellent links with the school ensure that children's transition to school is smooth and they feel secure within this setting. Staff work in partnership with the school's Foundation Stage Manager to ensure that the planning of activities is well co-ordinated and children's progression from one setting to another is seamless and their learning is uninterrupted. Children are also offered many opportunities to participate in school routines and activities, such as eating dinner in the school hall, sharing the outdoor play areas with the reception class and attending special events such as nativity plays and multi-cultural workshops. Good support

from nursery staff, school staff and the Head Teacher help to ensure that these experiences are positive for all children.

The careful planning of activities for all age groups ensures that children are consistently offered a range of opportunities which are linked to their individual needs and capabilities. Staff have attended additional training and have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They use this in all planning and assessment for younger children to ensure that their play is fun, purposeful and stimulating. Staff are skilled in extending and reinforcing children's learning through repeating themes and making links. For example, during a discussion about dreams and nightmares, the staff member allows children time to explain their dreams, then links this to a previous discussion about feelings, encouraging children to remember the different feelings and to talk about how their dreams make them feel.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress in all areas because staff have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, enabling them to plan and provide a wide range of appropriate activities. Children's progress is well balanced because staff use clear, comprehensive methods for assessing them, using the information gained from this to highlight areas to be covered in the future. This is further supported by the evaluation of all activities, with information from this being carried forward to positively inform future planning for group activities and for individuals.

Children are offered a wide range of activities and play experiences. These include familiar, regular activities such as reading, imaginative play, crafts and construction, which promote their confidence. Children's knowledge is further extended as they participate in a variety of themed topics. This offers them opportunities to look more closely at subjects such as 'Water', 'Growing Things', 'Animals' and 'People who Help us'. Children's learning and understanding are extended because daily activities are creatively linked to the current theme. For example, when covering the theme of 'Water', children looked at uses of water such as washing, designing T-shirts to hang on a washing line and using a washboard to wash clothes, using this as a basis to discuss changes in technology.

Children are positively encouraged to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their future learning. For example, they are motivated to learn and explore through exciting and interesting activities such as experimenting with ice, growing plants, exploring textures and pretending to be archaeologists and palaeontologists. They are aware of the expected codes of behaviour, for example, they understand the relevance of sharing and listening to each other and to adults, carefully following instructions, such as washing their hands and lining up to go through to school for lunch. Children thoroughly enjoy books and listen intently to stories in groups and individually. They show a very good understanding of books, for example, they correctly identify the author and illustrator and are able to explain these roles, confidently naming and discussing their favourite authors. Children are gaining a good understanding of language, for example, they correctly clap the number of syllables in words and recognise key letters and rhyming strings. They understand that writing can be used for a range of purposes, for example, a child writes a shopping list whilst pretending to talk on the telephone.

Children are beginning to use numbers in a meaningful context. An example of this is a member of staff and child playing with a 'washing line' mathematics game, where the staff member removes a number and the child correctly identifies which one is missing by looking at the

sequence. Children confidently use mathematical language in their daily play and understand the meaning of this vocabulary. For example, two children share the task of watering a plant and one child states "Two of us to do this, so we can do half each". Children's natural curiosity is encouraged and they have opportunities to observe, question and explore in a wide range of activities which form the foundation of their later learning in subjects such as science, history and technology. They have good access to information and communication technology resources and use these confidently. For example, two children competently work on the computer, using the mouse to choose programmes, direct lines and make patterns, printing these out when completed. Children talk confidently about their experiences and are able to differentiate between past and present, discussing activities and events which happened 'yesterday' and 'last week'.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which help them develop their confidence and skills when using large and small apparatus, tools and equipment. For example, they confidently use the climbing frame, slides and see-saw, balance on tyres and stepping stones, throw balls and manipulate construction pieces. They are developing an understanding of the relevance of good practices with regard to diet and personal hygiene through discussions with staff and activities linked to these themes. Children enjoy many opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form through activities such as painting, junk modelling, using play dough and making collages. They explore music and learn how sounds can be changed, for example, a child explores the musical instruments on the table, playing the tambourine softly and then loudly. Children's imagination is encouraged through a number of creative role play scenarios such as the creation of a builder's yard, a veterinary surgery, an Italian restaurant and a railway station. However, some activities are over-directed by adults and this means that some opportunities are missed to further develop and encourage children's own ideas and creativity.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children are valued as individuals and are able to feel welcome. Their needs are clearly recognised and their daily play and learning experiences are enhanced by highly appropriate support from staff to ensure that all are able to participate and develop to their potential. Children are respected and play an active part in the pre-school because staff involve them in decision-making and encourage them to express their ideas and feelings.

Children are offered numerous creative play opportunities, resources and activities which promote their understanding of their local community and the diversities of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include considerable interaction with the lower school and visits to local facilities such as the church. Visitors to the setting also help to increase children's understanding and enable them to gain a clear, meaningful knowledge of subjects such as cultural beliefs, 'people who help us' and the role of individuals within the community. Children use a range of resources which give information and positive images of other cultures and ways of life. These include dolls, maps, books, puzzles, cooking utensils and role play materials.

Children's behaviour is exceptionally good throughout the sessions. They are confident in choosing their activities and competent in organising turn-taking and sharing. They show great care and concern for each other, for example, a child notices another child sitting on a bench, sits next to her and asks if she is sad. They both then go to play on the large tyre. Staff are highly skilled in managing children's behaviour. They set consistent boundaries and always offer clear explanations so that children are able to understand their behaviour and begin to

take responsibility for their actions. Children's understanding is further promoted because staff discuss many issues with them and remind them of these at appropriate times, for example, a member of staff asks children playing at the sand tray why it is important to keep the sand in the tray. A child replies "We don't want sand on the floor, it might make you slip over". Staff act as excellent role models, treating all children with equal concern and always remaining calm, polite and attentive to all. Children respond exceptionally well to staff, and this extremely positive approach ensures that children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have special needs have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met as there is a clear, practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is consistently implemented. Staff have attended additional training and are skilled in assessing children's varying needs. Their excellent planning and individual support means that children are able to participate in all activities and routines and their development is consistently promoted. Children have individual plans which relate directly to their needs and are reviewed frequently to ensure that children's changing needs are met and their progress recorded. All reviews are evaluated to ensure that realistic targets and plans are set. Staff show great skill and sensitivity in this area, working with children and parents to make sure that all are included in activities and daily routines. They also ensure that children are offered the opportunity to make their views known and contribute actively to the review and planning process.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Staff show a great commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and in their children's learning. This is further supported by clear guidance which covers areas such as daily practicalities, responsibilities and roles. Children's daily care and their ability to settle quickly is enhanced by the attention staff pay to ensuring that they are aware of all relevant issues for each individual. Excellent use is made of home visits to enable staff to gather information about the children and pass on information about the setting. This helps both parents and children to feel confident and valued. Parents are able to be actively involved in their child's learning because staff provide a wealth of practical information about activities and all areas of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, producing posters, displays and booklets to illustrate these. Parents are kept exceptionally well informed of their children's progress through daily discussion with staff, newsletters, open mornings, consultation sessions and telephone consultations. Parents' views are actively sought, for example, through the use of questionnaires. Staff act positively on feedback, reviewing their practice and implementing possible changes. This positive attitude ensures that parents' views are valued, standards are maintained and high quality care can be provided for each child.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Overall, children's needs are met. They benefit from the care provided by caring, well-supervised staff and from their attention to detail in all areas of the organisation of the setting. Children's ongoing welfare and safety are promoted because there are robust procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children. This is further supported by comprehensive guidance regarding the recruitment and employment of staff. A thorough staff induction process, regular supervision and appraisals and daily monitoring of all areas of the setting ensure that the setting's policies and procedures are understood by all and are consistently applied. All paperwork and records are in place to ensure that children's needs are clearly documented and staff can work appropriately to promote their ongoing safety and development.

Children's daily care, activities and play opportunities are enhanced by the thoughtful organisation of space, both inside and outside the setting. Designated areas for different types of activities mean that children are able to concentrate on their chosen activity and can move safely between the activities. Excellent organisation of the outdoor area means that this is used as a natural extension to the indoor play area, offering children further choices and activities. It is included in all planning and evaluations and is well resourced. For example, a child chooses a book and sits on the comfortable seating to read, whilst another group of children explore the musical instruments on the table before moving on to the home corner. Colourful displays, posters, a planting area and outdoor play equipment further enhance the area and make it an interesting and exciting place for children to play.

Leadership and management is good. Children's overall development and welfare are promoted by the very clear understanding that the manager and deputy have of their roles and responsibilities. They have organised all paperwork efficiently and carry out regular reviews to ensure that they are aware of all changes and are able to meet all regulations consistently. They act as good role models, attending additional training and demonstrating their enthusiasm and genuine enjoyment of their work. This creates a very positive atmosphere within the setting, in which children can play, learn and develop. Children also benefit from the consistent and practical support provided by the voluntary management committee. They ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children and are well supported, both in terms of resources and meeting ongoing training needs.

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

At their last inspection, the group was asked to consider further developing their current practice. They have now achieved the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award, thus improving the standards of care offered to all children. With regard to the provision of funded education, they were asked to provide further opportunities for children to link sounds to letters. They have now included a weekly session where a specific programme is carried out. Further opportunities are also incorporated into the daily planning and activities, therefore improving children's understanding of phonics.

### **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):

- further develop the procedure at snack time to increase children's understanding and independence
- improve children's safety by ensuring that electrical sockets are safe or inaccessible to 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 develop further opportunities which enable and encourage children to develop and express their own ideas and creativity.

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)