

# St Bartholomew's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	205298
<b>Inspection date</b>	30 January 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachel Wyatt
<b>Setting Address</b>	Grimley & Holt C of E Primary School, Grimley, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR2 6LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01905 640322
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	St Bartholemew's Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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?

St Bartholomew's Pre-School playgroup opened in 1988. It operates from a demountable building, which is in the grounds of Grimley & Holt Church of England Primary School. It is situated in a rural village setting near the northern outskirts of Worcester City and has a voluntary management committee made up of parent representatives. It is open each weekday except Wednesday from 08:30 until 14:50 during school term times only. A maximum of 20 children aged from two to under five years may attend at any one time. Children share access to the school's secure outdoor area.

Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 23 children from two years six months, to five years on roll. Of these, 19 children receive funding for early education. Support is available for children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also for children who speak English as an additional language.

Eight staff work with the children. Four members of staff hold appropriate Early Years qualifications, including two qualified teachers, and two members of staff are currently attending

Early Years training. The group receives support from a local authority mentor teacher and the pre-school is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of good hygiene is fostered during well managed toileting and nappy change routines. They discuss the importance of good personal hygiene. The refurbished toilets with child-size equipment are inviting for children to use and promote their independence. The new adult toilet is ideal for nappy changing and the setting has robust procedures for ensuring soiled items and spillages are dealt with safely. Children also take part in activities and discussions which help them to appreciate other aspects of a healthy lifestyle such as the value of a balanced diet and regular exercise.

Children's good health is promoted by staff who discuss their individual care and health needs with their parents. Children receive appropriate treatment should they become unwell, have an accident or require medication. All staff have a current first aid qualification and parents give their consent to medical advice and treatment being sought in an emergency. Appropriate accident, incident and medication records are kept and shared with parents. Risks of cross-infection are also minimised due to effective procedures for managing any outbreaks of contagious diseases or infections. Children know about limiting the spread of germs through good hand washing and using tissues to blow and wipe their noses.

Children's comfort is promoted. They are looked after in an inviting room with welcoming play areas and a cosy book corner. Children and adults all relax here during group discussions and stories. The group is committed to maintaining the premises to support children's health and welfare. Effective measures include regular cleaning and everyone has benefited from improvements to the toilet and kitchen areas. Ongoing improvements are being made to the outdoor area where children have plenty of fresh air and exercise. Children's independence is fostered as they get ready to go outside. They are encouraged to put on their own coats, and they talk about the clothes they wear in cold and hot weather. Children are protected from the sun. They use shaded areas, wear hats and sun cream, and avoid outside play in the heat of the day.

Children are well nourished. The pre-school works with parents to ensure children have healthy snacks and lunches. Parents provide these, but the group supplements children's snacks with fresh fruit and drinks of milk or squash. Children also help themselves to drinks from a water dispenser. Children discuss healthy eating and foods associated with different events and celebrations such as bonfire night or Christmas. They enjoy cookery. Staff training in food hygiene and the reorganisation of the kitchen area have enhanced arrangements for the preparation and storage of food.

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

The provision is good.

Children are looked after in secure premises, which are free from hazards. Careful monitoring of door security, effective safety checks and robust risk assessments all promote children's safety. Staff supervise them well but without inhibiting their exploration. Appropriate use is

made of safety equipment to minimise hazards, and circulation areas are kept clear around furniture and activities.

Children are encouraged to be responsible for their own safety. Staff ensure they handle tools correctly, manage apparatus safely and develop an awareness of space, for example, when using wheeled toys. Toys, furniture and equipment are age-appropriate and regularly maintained. During a topic on 'journeys' children explore aspects of road safety. They are prepared for emergency situations as they take part in unannounced school fire drills and pre-school evacuations.

Children are protected. Staff are well informed about child protection procedures through comprehensive 'in house' training and discussions, for example, at staff meetings. Any accidents or incidents are managed effectively, recorded and then discussed with parents. Appropriate vetting and robust collection arrangements also minimise the risks of harm to children. Children are also introduced sensitively to issues relating to their welfare such as not talking to people they do not know.

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

The provision is good.

Children like being at pre-school. They really enjoy free play activities and good opportunities to be creative and to explore different materials. Children respond to the inviting room layout so they quickly settle on arrival. The cosy book corner encourages an appreciation of books and stories. They like using an interesting range of art and craft materials, exploring dough and sand and taking part in imaginative play. Good use is made of toys and resources to extend children's ideas, so that a well set out role play area gives them the chance relive aspects of the story of 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. During outdoor activities children take an energetic and lively interest as they search for different items. Staff are relaxed and ensure children have the time and freedom to try things out for themselves, but they are receptive to those who may need some adult support and involvement.

Planning and assessment generally supports children's play and development well. Their progress is assessed in relation to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, there is a lack of continuity between assessment and planning because plans do not clearly show how younger or less able children will be able to progress in relation to the framework. This means that staff do not have clear guidance on how to consistently support younger children's needs. However, in other respects the emphasis on exploratory and imaginative play suits younger children, and staff often adapt their approach or resources according to children's ability and level of understanding.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are usually enthusiastic and attentive learners. They settle quickly in the inviting environment, enjoying the initial free play session. Children are often purposeful, enjoying the interesting topics and varied activities provided for them. They are encouraged to play and learn together. However, there are times when children lose interest or are not sufficiently challenged, for example, during their play together, some whole group discussions or when waiting for their snack. Children concentrate better when adults are actively involved in what they are doing. Children's independence is fostered well and they are encouraged to be helpful. Accessible storage means that they can often self select toys, and take responsibility for their work or possessions such as their coats.

Children are confident speakers, singing or talking to their peers in both a small or large group. They enjoy books and stories and are encouraged to appreciate the meaning of print. They recognise their own names and some children are beginning to write recognisable letters or simple words. Their awareness of letter sounds is fostered during activities and routines, for example, when talking about the weather and days of the week.

Children are confident to count in different situations, with some of them able to recognise numbers up to 10. They find solutions to number problems, for example, 'how can we work out how many children are here?' by making suggestions such as 'counting the name cards'. They enjoy number rhymes and sorting items such as Autumn leaves, by shape, size and colour.

Many topics and activities help children to explore and find out about new things. They enjoy being outside where they are physically active, investigate features of their play area, grow bulbs and plants and explore different natural materials. They are observant and often represent their observations in their craft and artwork. After looking at some shells, a group of children draw detailed treasure maps, confidently describing different features. They show interest in how their body works, creating skeleton pictures and discussing different organs, the senses and the value of a healthy lifestyle. Their detailed self portraits and 'funny faces' collages reflect both their understanding and creativity.

Effective planning ensures topics and activities are well thought out and rewarding for children. Good use is made of sessions which focus on specific skills such as coordination and movement, and which create opportunities for staff's observations. These and other assessments, including parents' views, are used to inform children's progress records, but short term plans generally lack detail on how individual children's learning needs will be accommodated. In practice children's learning is fostered well by staff who have a warm rapport with them. They talk to children about what they are doing and recognise their achievements. Children's interest is promoted by good questioning which promotes their thinking, descriptions and recall. Many activities challenge children's understanding and introduce them to different ways of doing things, such as collecting and recording items they have found outside. Inviting resources and the adults' encouragement enable children to confidently express their ideas, for example, when they make a collaborative 'huge monster' picture or create 'treasure maps'. However, there are some missed opportunities to fully engage children's attention due to the organisation or timing of discussions. For example, when talking about the results of the children's survey into eye colour, interruptions mean they do not concentrate and miss important teaching points.

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

The provision is good.

Children's individuality and self-esteem are positively encouraged. Managers and staff consistently recognise their achievements. Often during a session staff highlight children's work, their responses or their good behaviour. Children's awareness of diversity is fostered through books, toys and resources. During the current topic 'All about me', children explore similarities and differences, for example, in appearance or ability, in a way they can understand. They have painted self-portraits, made glasses, compared eye colour and discussed hearing.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported. Their progress is consistently monitored and reviewed. The setting's special needs coordinator has a good understanding of her role, and there is effective liaison with parents and other agencies.

Children generally behave well. During routines and activities staff reinforce positive behaviour such as looking after toys and books or being helpful, polite and kind. Children like to assist with different tasks and older children often show kindness, for example, to their younger or less able peers. They enjoy each others' company and mostly play cooperatively. Children usually listen and follow instructions well. However, at times the organisation of activities and routines results in children becoming distracted. Staff generally intervene promptly should children misbehave. Through age-appropriate explanations they are encouraged to think about the effects of their actions on others and to apologise. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There is a positive relationship with parents and carers. From the outset their views about their children are encouraged and respected. They are welcomed to stay in the setting, for example, stopping for a short while to read a story or play a game. Parents are generally well informed about how the setting is organised and managed, for instance, via the comprehensive prospectus, policies, regular newsletters and from displays on the parents' notice board. Parents serve on the management committee and help with fundraising. They appreciate daily informal discussions with staff about their children's activities and progress. Should parents have any concerns, the setting's complaints policy broadly reflects the requirements of the National Standards. However, minor inaccuracies mean that parents do not have up to date details regarding Ofsted's role and how to make contact.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. They contribute to the management of the group by serving on the committee. There are increased opportunities for them to contribute to their children's learning in the setting whether staying to settle them, helping to develop the outdoor area or sharing their skills in the group. Parents are well informed about intentions of the Foundation Stage and the range of activities their children take part in. They appreciate regular informal feedback about their children's activities and progress, and also receive a written report before their child starts school.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are safeguarded and parents are reassured as a result of appropriate procedures to ensure staff and committee members are vetted and suitable. Managers and staff work well together. They understand their responsibilities to promote children's care and safety. They discuss and refer to relevant guidance and policies to help them with their duties. Staff meetings are used well for considering good practice issues. Staff also keep up to date by attending short courses such as child protection, first aid and food hygiene. Children are well supported as good adult to child ratios are maintained. However, their welfare is at times compromised because minimum staff qualification requirements are not met at every session, although two staff have started an introductory play and care course.

In other respects children benefit from the group's commitment to ensuring progress and development within the setting. Recent initiatives have had a positive impact on children's health and safety. These include refurbishments to the toilet and kitchen areas and the purchase of new physical play apparatus. Careful attention has been given to improving resources.

Children's safety is supported by generally effective policies and procedures which have recently been reviewed, for example, those relating to hygiene and safety, including risk assessments. Apart from some minor inconsistencies, the group's policies provide a practical guide for staff and points of reference for parents. Record keeping also supports children's care and well-being,

so that the group has all relevant information safely stored and parents' wishes are reflected in clear agreements.

The leadership and management of funded children is good. Children learn in an inviting and well resourced environment, with the support and involvement of capable staff. An effective key worker system and reference to a planning and learning scheme support the group's organisation of worthwhile topics for the children. Improvements to assessment and regular evaluations of plans mean that the quality of the setting's nursery education is consistently monitored. Overall children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection the provider agreed to four recommendations relating to aspects of health, hygiene, safety, sharing information with parents and operational requirements. Children's health and hygiene are promoted well as a result of improvements in toileting, hand washing and nappy changing facilities and associated procedures. Children are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water from a dispenser which is clean and safe to use. Their safety is supported by the pre-school's risk assessments, including daily check lists used by staff to ensure all areas are free from hazards. Parents are now well informed about most aspects of the pre-school's ethos and organisation, including their children's activities and achievements. They see copies of daily activity plans. A folder of the group's policies is readily available, with some aspects also summarised in a comprehensive prospectus. Key information about the group's operational plan are displayed and in the main these procedures support the smooth running of the group.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to three key issues. These related to developing assessment and planning in order to support children's individual needs, to providing more challenging and regular opportunities for children to balance and climb, and to giving parents more information about their children's daily activities. Children's learning and progress have benefited from the staff's growing confidence in observing and in assessment. As a result managers and staff know children well and they often adapt their teaching to cater for children's responses as reflected in the focus on specific skills each week. However, information about children's differing learning needs are not specified in short term planning, so staff do not always have clear guidance regarding those children who need additional help or who may need more challenge. This remains an area for improvement.

Children's access to more demanding balancing and climbing activities is being addressed through ongoing developments to the outside area, including the provision of more challenging apparatus. Parents and carers are now able to see topic plans and daily activity plans, so they are better informed about what their children are doing. They appreciate regular feedback given about their child's achievements and interests.

### **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):

- improve the outcomes for younger children by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters' as part of planning
- improve the complaints policy to give parents accurate information about the role of Ofsted
- improve staff deployment so that minimum qualification requirements are consistently met.

#### 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 short term planning in order to incorporate children's individual learning needs and to show how these will be met
- improve the management of group discussions and activities in order to consistently retain children's interest, and to provide those who are more able with sufficient challenges.

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)