

# Oswestry Methodist Church Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	224157
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Dianne Andrews
<b>Setting Address</b>	Methodist Church, Castle Street, OSWESTRY, Shropshire, SY11 1JZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	07766 328031
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Oswestry Methodist Church
<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?

Oswestry Methodist Pre-School opened in 1968. It operates from three rooms, a hall and an outside area, and is situated in a church building in Oswestry town centre. The setting serves the local area.

There are currently 56 children from two to five years on roll. This includes 33 children in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have disabilities or learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 15:00 every day, except Tuesdays when they are from 09:15 until 12:30. Eight staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-organised routines and activities. They understand the need to wash their hands after using the toilet, singing a washing hands song to remind them to clean hands and fingers. Staff skilfully extend their understanding, for example, explaining that they are washing away the germs. Children's well-being is promoted because staff are well informed about children's health care matters and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. Staff attend first aid and food hygiene training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health and prevent the spread of infection. Facilities for sleep or rest are not required on a regular basis, but have not been effectively considered to ensure they protect children from cross-infection.

Children's dietary needs are met through a well-balanced range of nutritious snacks that take account of their individual needs and preferences. Children learn the importance of having a healthy diet through discussions with staff and planned activities such as shopping for fresh vegetables at a local greengrocers and making and tasting the soup they make with the produce. Lunch and snack times are social occasions when children sit down together with staff to eat their food. However, their understanding of good table manners at mealtimes is not enhanced as snacks and packed lunch contents are served directly onto the tabletops without the provision of suitable plates. Children have free access to drinking water throughout the session to ensure they are not thirsty.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities both indoors and outside that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have daily access to the small, but well-resourced outdoor area, which offers numerous opportunities for child-led activities. Here they develop roadways for their wheeled toys and make chutes, which they roll balls down, using the guttering and down-pipes. Children benefit from use of the large space available in the hall where they develop their physical skills effectively. They enthusiastically climb the wooden frame and jump off into a bean bag, described by the supervising staff member as 'squidgy mud', and negotiate the gradients of the soft play shapes, at times pushing pushchairs. They gain an understanding of the changes that happen to their bodies after exercise through planned activities, recognising that they are hot and thirsty.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in the secure indoor and outdoor environment where stringent measures are in place to monitor the entrance to the nursery to prevent unauthorised access. Each playroom is well-organised and equipped with appropriate furniture. The decor in the rooms is dated, but rooms are made welcoming by the addition of posters and children's work, which have to be set out by staff on many days due to the restrictions in place by the landlords of the building. Staff work very hard to overcome this obstacle for the benefit of children's enjoyment.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because thorough procedures are in place to ensure health and safety guidelines are followed and risk assessments are carried out in most areas. Children can, on the whole, move around freely and safely within their own areas of the

provision. The bottom of the stairs are gated to prevent young children accessing them, and although the nursery children who use a first floor room understand that they must use the stairs carefully and slowly as they independently go to the toilet facilities, the accessible stairs pose a risk to their safety.

Children use an extremely wide range of safe and suitable toys and equipment, some of which are old but all are well maintained and cleaned regularly. Staff supervise children's play to promote their safety. They are kept safe on outings because clear procedures are followed and separate risk assessments are carried out to identify any possible hazards. Children learn to keep themselves safe as emergency evacuation routines are practised regularly to promote their safety in the event of a fire. They actively tidy away after free-play sessions, learning to keep their play space safe.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff attend child protection training and know the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern.

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

The provision is good.

Children settle well or are supported to do so by the caring and sensitive staff who show kindness and concern, helping children separate from their parents and carers and reassuring them when they become upset or unsettled during the session. 'Hello' times help children to feel a sense of belonging and to develop skills such as listening and turn-taking, as well as being a positive way to increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Children are eager and enthusiastic as they freely select from the wide range of toys and resources provided by staff based on senior staff member's substantial knowledge of child development and their understanding of children's preferences. Staff support children well during their play to promote their natural curiosity, for example, sharing their enthusiasm while experimenting with a mix of sand and shaving foam and while blowing bubbles into soapy water. Children are in charge of their own play, which is empowering and helps to building self-esteem and a strong sense of self within the group. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is reflected in the group's good practice and they have introduced the framework into their planning and assessment for children under the age of three.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality and teaching of learning is good. Children are confident learners and explore the well planned environment with eager curiosity. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and offer a wide range of interesting activities that enable children to progress well in all the areas of learning. Most staff show an expert knowledge of how children learn, however, on occasions some adult-led activities are not tailored effectively to suit the developmental stage that the children are at; resulting in some disinterest. Assessments of children's learning are generally effective and pertinent. Most staff effectively use the stepping stones to monitor children's progress so that children's next steps can be identified. Children benefit from the free-flow play environment, where they have numerous opportunities to make independent choices and develop their own learning. Staff support and guide children with skill and sensitivity and take opportunities to extend children's independence and learning by increasing the level of challenge in most of their activities.

Children are confident and active, and they approach their activities with enthusiasm and develop good relationships with each other. They communicate clearly and confidently, initiating conversations with their peers or the adults around them. They delight in listening to well-told stories and enjoy choosing books for themselves, which they handle with care and respect. They develop their own ideas which are valued and supported by staff, for instance as they change the pirate ship role play area into a fire station. Most children identify their own names with confidence and are encouraged to extend and value their own attempts at mark-making. There are many examples of the written word in the environment so that children observe communication in writing for different purposes, although they are not routinely involved in making the labelling themselves.

Children benefit from a wide range of activities that help them develop an understanding of numbers and mathematical language. They count during everyday routines, sing rhymes and songs and use numbers in their play, for example, on the menus in the café role play area. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well through a good range of practical activities. Visitors to the setting and regular outings ensure children learn about their local community and develop their sense of belonging. They are developing good skills in using technology as they ably use early years programmes on the computer.

Children play imaginatively in many areas of the nursery and become engrossed in games that develop as they imitate everyday experiences using toys such as cars, dolls and dinosaurs. They enjoy investigating and exploring a wide range of materials and mediums, such as sand, composting soil, sand, water and foam, which helps them develop their imaginations. They mix paints and use tools such as scissors and glue sticks with competence. Music helps children explore sounds; they move to music using coloured scarves to express their feelings and have opportunities to make their own music with a variety of musical instruments.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into the setting and are valued by staff who respect their individuality, which helps them develop a strong sense of belonging. They are learning to recognise and respect the needs of others, for example, understanding that some of their peers are not able to eat certain foods. They share their news and particularly relish telling their peers about the activities they did with the doll, Rosie Sunshine, who they take home on a rotational basis. All children are included and have equal opportunities to access resources and equipment that meets their individual needs so that they can become confident and independent. The pre-school offers effective support for children with disabilities or learning difficulties. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator works closely with parents and other professionals to meet children's specific needs.

Children are encouraged to make positive choices and decisions about how they wish to spend their time. For example, choosing to go outside, play in the hall or the messy room and planning their first activity. Their independence is effectively promoted by the well-organised environment and child accessible storage from which they freely self-select resources. Children understand responsible behaviour and are quick to remind each other, for example, 'you have to say thank you'. Staff sensitively interact with children and are aware if they are tired or upset. They are good role models and use calm and consistent strategies appropriate to children's stage of development, diverting their attention where possible and using positive language, endeavouring to raise children's self-esteem.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are sensitive and show concern for their peers, for example, asking 'are you alright?' when they collide while playing. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of people's different needs and cultures, for example, through learning some simple phrases such as good morning using sign language. Children have access to resources such as posters, books and role play opportunities promoting a positive view of diversity, and they look at a variety of cultural festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Chinese New Year.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents are well informed about the Foundation Stage and their children's progress through sharing records of progress at termly meetings. Parents are very positive about the standards of education provided and complimentary about the caring and sensitive staff and how their children have made such good progress since attending the group.

All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are looked after according to their parents' wishes. Staff and parents share information verbally on a daily basis to ensure children's changing needs are met and to provide continuity of care. The views of parents are sought and acted upon through questionnaires and a suggestion box. A very informative parent's notice board, regular newsletters and a comprehensive prospectus ensure that parents are well informed about the running of the provision.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Operational procedures and policies work in practice to support the successful running of the provision and to promote children's good health, safety, welfare and development. All the required documents and consents are in place to ensure staff follow parents' wishes regarding their children's care. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current regulations. Robust recruitment and appointment procedures are in place to ensure children are protected and cared for by staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development.

The well-organised environment and effective staff deployment enhances children's enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Adults are well trained and this, along with the excellent adult to child ratios, positively supports children's care, learning and play.

Leadership and management is good.

The strong leadership and management of the nursery education positively contributes to children's progress towards the early learning goals. The pre-school leader has a clear vision of providing very good nursery education, which is wholeheartedly shared by staff. The leader sets clear direction leading to improvements in the organisation of nursery education and outcomes for children, and is exceptionally active in identifying future areas for development. Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure that medication records are completed appropriately. Parents now countersign all entries to the records to promote children's well-being.

They were also asked to ensure the entrance doors are secure and that the fire door remains accessible within the nursery room. There are now very effective procedures in place at the entrance doors with a nominated staff member supervising entrance and egress effectively, and the fire door is clear from obstruction at all times to promote children's safety.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to provide opportunities in the playgroup room to access a more attractive book area. Children now readily access books from the display provided and use the cushioned area to relax on while looking at the books.

They were also asked to provide opportunities for nursery children to plan, do, and review more effectively, so ensuring that children know what activities are available and are encouraged to listen to others at review time. Children have many opportunities to develop their listening skills during the daily routine. They are encouraged to make choices about what they want to do as they place their name cards on a display of activities available for the session.

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

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require 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 stairs are inaccessible to children
- ensure that the facilities for rest or sleep promote the good health of children and prevent the spread of infection.

#### **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):

- ensure that all adult-led activities are planned and delivered effectively to suit the developmental needs of the 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)