

# Charlton with Cropthorne Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	205314
<b>Inspection date</b>	08 June 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Sally Wride
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Old School Room, Ryden Lane, Charlton, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 3LQ.
<b>Telephone number</b>	07966 216980
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Charlton with Cropthorne 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?

Charlton with Crophorne Pre-School has been running for over 30 years and changed to become a community owned and committee run group in 2002. It operates from the Old School Hall behind the local church in the village of Charlton near Pershore. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves the local area and has strong links with the local school.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 27 children from 2 to 4 years-old on roll. This includes 20 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has procedures to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:15. An optional lunch club is also provided and runs from 12:15 until 13:15. An afternoon session is available from 12:15 to 14:45 on a Tuesday afternoon, which allows children to stay all day in preparation for school.

There are four members of staff who work with the children, but only three on any one day. All staff hold early years qualifications to National Vocational Qualification level 3. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the Local Authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment. Regular cleaning of toys and equipment ensures that the risk of cross-infection is minimised. Children develop an understanding of good hygiene practice as they use good quality hand washing resources and facilities to wash their hands at appropriate times. They explain that they wash their hands to 'wash away the germs' and 'to make them clean'. All of the required health documentation is effectively maintained and a well stocked first aid box is readily accessible. Effective procedures are in place if children fall ill whilst in attendance at the setting. Staff have access to information about infection control and advised minimum exclusion periods and openly share this with parents.

Children enjoy excellent opportunities to play outdoors and enjoy the fresh air. They extend and develop their physical skills in the garden and relish their time outside. They pedal bikes and trikes up and down a pathway, engage in imaginative play with their peers in the play house, and develop their own games using a range of sports equipment. They are able to rest and relax as they sit and have a chat with their friends on seats positioned under shaded trees. They plant and tend to vegetables and flowers, water them and watch with interest as they grow.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy healthy snacks that offer variety and choice and make decisions about what they would like to eat from the selection available. This encourages their independence and decision making skills. Fresh drinks are offered at snack time and drinking water is easily accessible throughout the session to ensure that children are well hydrated. Children enjoy eating packed lunches at an optional lunch club. These are suitably stored prior to being offered to children. Children have the opportunity to learn about the nutritional benefits of food as they engage in discussions with the staff and their peers about their favourite and least favourite foods. They have a developing understanding that eating healthily will help keep them strong. Children display good table manners, for example, one child asked 'can I leave the table' when he had finished his lunch. Meal and snack times are relaxed, social occasions when children and staff sit together around the table to enjoy their food and each other's company. Children enjoy regular baking activities and enjoy tasting their creations or taking them home to share with their families. Parents are able to continue their children's enjoyment of baking at home as a file of their favourite recipes is readily accessible on a notice board.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a bright and cheerful care environment, in which they are happy and settled. They have plenty of space to move freely and easily around their base room and benefit from being able to independently access toilet facilities, which promotes their self-care skills. A well-organised store room houses the wide range of toys and resources that are available. Staff cater for children's learning and development needs and also their individual preferences as

they rotate resources each day to ensure that children remain challenged and stimulated in their play. A vast selection of resources are available each day, catering for all areas of development. All of the toys and resources are well maintained and are regularly cleaned to ensure that they remain hygienic for the children to use.

The premises are secure and children are well supervised at all times. There are good procedures for the safe arrival and collection of children, including information regarding named persons who are able to collect the children. The outdoor area is safe, secure and well-maintained. Staff join in with children's play and supervise their games to ensure that they are safe in their play. Written risk assessments are in place and are reviewed annually to ensure that all perceived risks are identified and minimised. Daily visual checks are undertaken by staff to ensure that the children's care environment remains free from hazards.

Children have the opportunity to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe as they practise the 'stop, look and listen' technique when crossing the road. They participate in regular fire evacuation practises to ensure that they are familiar with the actions that they should take in the event of an emergency. Children's safety and welfare is well promoted through effective child protection policies and procedures. All staff have a clear understanding of the known indicators of child abuse and the action that they should take in the event of a concern about a child in their care. Written policies are openly shared with parents to ensure that they are well informed.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at pre-school and have lots of fun with their friends and trusted staff. They are confident and freely move throughout the setting, accessing their playthings and making decisions about how they would like to spend their time. They chat animatedly as they play and during social interactions, for example, mealtimes and circle time activities. They ask the staff questions and respond well to instructions about the activities that will be available during the session. Children have their individual needs met and are developing a good range of knowledge and skills because activities and play opportunities are provided that help children achieve in all areas. Children behave very well and enjoy warm praise and encouragement from caring and supportive staff. This develops children's self-esteem.

Staff have attended 'Birth to three matters' framework training and use both their knowledge and experience to ensure that younger children are well cared for and fully included in the life of the setting. However, planned activities do not detail how younger children's learning needs and capabilities are catered for and as a result, may not be fully supported or challenged as they move forward in their learning.

### **Nursery Education:**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and plan a wide range of topic related activities which appeal to the children and cover all six areas of learning. Written plans include imaginative and worthwhile play activities for children. However, the plans do not always provide sufficient detail of the intended learning outcomes for children and how activities can be adapted to meet individual children's needs. The daily routine is flexibly applied. Children enjoy a good balance of both adult and child-led activities, which allows them to develop their own interests and at their own pace. A key worker system is in operation and children's progress is carefully

monitored. Written observations and assessments are regularly made and are openly shared with parents. Assessments show what the children are learning and how they can be helped to progress. Staff are well-organised in their preparation for the session and the activities provided. Each theme is very well resourced, either from the range of resources owned by the setting or borrowed from other toy lending libraries. The staff help children to consolidate and extend their learning by participating in their play, asking questions and encouraging discussion. Children enjoy good relationships with the staff, who encourage them to become involved and to persevere with tasks. Effective behaviour management ensures that children develop an understanding of right from wrong, rules and boundaries and how to be considerate to others. Effective use of time, the accommodation and resources helps children's learning. They are able to access activities independently, make choices within their learning and have time to complete activities. The session is well paced which ensures that children are fully engaged and do not become disruptive. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Children are motivated and interested to learn. They settle quickly upon their arrival for circle time activities and discussions about the theme of the week and the activities and play opportunities that will be available that day. They have the opportunity to learn about the days of the week and changes in the weather as they work as a group to complete the weather chart. Children are confident in their surroundings and make decisions about what they would like to play with and how they would like to spend their time. They show developing concentration skills as they persevere with activities. Their independence is fostered as they pour their own drinks, make decisions about their play and access toilet facilities independently, which also promotes their self-care skills. Children behave very well and are busy and occupied in their play. Strategies such as using an egg timer to monitor time spent on the computer ensures that children develop an understanding of sharing and fairness. They play together in groups, forming relationships with their peers. They often seek their friends to join in with their games and make room for each other as they sit to listen to a story. Staff know the children well and make sure that they receive the support that they need to fully participate in the life of the setting.

Children eagerly engage in conversation with both their peers and the staff. They chat animatedly during their play and at circle time and snack time. They concentrate well as staff read them stories and become eagerly involved as they are asked what is happening in the story and what they think might happen next. Children often choose to sit quietly with a book. They handle books well as they turn the pages and talk about what they can see in the pictures. They also enjoy reading stories to their dolls or to their friends. They enact staff roles as they read stories aloud and ask questions about what is happening. Children are helped to link letters to sounds through the use of a phonic learning system. Staff develop children's understanding as they explore objects in a box that begin with the same letter and are encouraged to think about other words that start with the same letter. Children have many opportunities to practise their developing writing skills. Writing resources are freely available on the arts trolley and in the role play area, which ensures that children are able to write for their own purpose as they play. Many of the older children are able to write their names and younger children are well supported by staff as they begin to form recognisable letters. They see their names and other print displayed around the setting, which helps them to develop an understanding that print carries meaning.

Children show an interest in numbers and counting and spontaneously use mathematical language in their play. For example, children count the number of objects that they can see when using mirrored prisms. Many of the older children are able to count past ten, using their friends and playthings as props. They explore volume and capacity as they pour sand from one

container to another and experiment with weighing scales and weights as they try to balance the scales. During weighing activities children use mathematical language such as more, less, heavy and light. They use shape dominoes and name the shapes that they can see and associate them to other objects, for example, one child commented that a circle is like a ball. They match and sort objects into different shapes and colours and have great fun creating long tracks to take their trains on a journey. Children make good progress in their physical development. They balance as they move along stepping stones and balancing beams and pedal well on bikes and trikes. They are able to take risks in a controlled environment as they climb small trees under the direct supervision of staff. Their fine motor control is developed as they use tools, such as scissors and play dough cutters. They use their imaginations as they play outdoors to enact jumping over the path, which they imagine to be a river and in the outdoor play house.

Children have daily access to computer equipment. They use their developing mouse control to work their way through age-appropriate programmes that encourage learning in other areas, for example, colour, shape, letter and number recognition. They comment on the functions of the computer, for example, one child said 'this is a sound button' as he turned the volume up and down. Children have strong exploratory impulses. They use magnetic wands to move objects around mazes and test other objects around the room to see if they are magnetic or not. They use mirrored prisms to explore reflection and keenly count how many images of one object they can see. They use construction toys to design and build and use different materials, such as tape and glue to explore different joining techniques. Children keenly converse with both the staff and their peers about their homes lives, talking about activities that they have enjoyed with their families and what they will be doing when they get home from pre-school. Children enjoy visits and trips, either locally for short walks or further afield to farm parks, countryside centres and butterfly farms. They enjoy looking through photograph albums of themselves and their peers and use these to recall past experiences of pre-school.

The role play area is a popular choice with children. They engage in imaginative activities either alone or with their peers, for example, enacting characters such as doctors, nurses and fire-fighters. They enjoy a wealth of arts and crafts, either structured activities or independently accessing materials to creatively produce pictures. Children enjoy making cakes and biscuits to enjoy at snack time or to take home to share with their families. They help tend to the vegetable patch in the garden and use their produce to make fresh soup. They investigate what happens when they paint over wax crayon pictures, showing determination when trying to make their picture disappear. They readily join in with the singing of familiar rhymes and songs, acting out associated actions with enjoyment. They work as a group to create musical instruments, such as rain makers, to explore the different noises that can be made. They enjoy a fortnightly music session, provided by an external agency and participate in singing and dancing activities.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in their care environment and benefit from care that is tailored to meet their individual needs. This ensures that all children are able to participate at a level best suited to their individual stage of learning and development. Children have the opportunity to develop an appreciation of the world in which they live through well planned activities and events. They benefit from parents and members of the community attending the setting to talk about festivals and cultural events, such as Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas and Easter. They access resources that promote positive images of diversity in their everyday play which helps them to develop an understanding of the world in which they live. Although the setting is not currently caring for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, effective systems

are in place. The special needs coordinator of the setting has attended relevant training and all staff are aware of the support that is available through external agencies and health professionals. The importance of working in partnership with parents is recognised to ensure that children's needs are effectively met.

Children behave very well. They are well occupied in their play and are challenged, stimulated and involved in the range of activities that are available to them. This has a positive effect on their behaviour. They are confident in their environment and in the company of their peers and trusted staff. Good relationships have clearly been formed and children readily seek their friends to join in with their play, for example, one child said 'do you want to come and play with me'. Any behavioural issues that arise are quickly addressed by staff. They work with the children to resolve conflicts, providing age-appropriate explanations to develop their understanding of right from wrong. Staff are calm and consistent and children benefit from their direct interactions in their play. They are enthusiastic as they work with the children, suggest ideas for their play and offer lots of warm praise and encouragement, which develops their self-esteem. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit greatly from the positive relationships that have been developed between their parents and the staff. Daily exchanges of information promote an effective two-way flow of information and ensures that all involved in the care of the children are well informed about children's changing needs. Both parents and children benefit from a home visit from the manager of the pre-school prior to starting at the group. This promotes trusting and effective relationships between parents and staff and ensures that children have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the staff, which helps them settle when they start at the group. It also provides time to exchange important information about the care of the child, their individual likes, dislikes and health needs. A well presented written prospectus and policies and procedures file are provided to all parents at the start of their child's placement. This ensures that parents are well informed of the organisation of the setting. Notice boards detail information about the setting, local events and general information, for example, recipe ideas.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are welcome to attend the setting to participate in the session and accompany their children on short walks and outings further a field. They are invited to attend the summer sports day and Christmas carol concert. This helps the children to feel settled and secure in their care environment and encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning. Parents are fully informed of their children's progress and achievements through informal discussions and more formal twice yearly parent's meetings. Parents are involved in helping staff to plan for their children's progress right from the start as they work together to complete information of their children's starting points during the home visit. Parents are provided with regular newsletters which informs them of planned activities that will be provided to children. They are asked to help their children select objects from home that link to the theme to bring in and share with their peers, for example, items that link to the letter or colour of the week. Parents who have a particular skill or profession, such as farming, are invited to talk to the children about their work. Each child has an attractive and well presented file containing their art work, photographs from their time at home and at the setting and information about activities that they have enjoyed with their families, such as holidays, special occasions and days out. These are a pleasure for children, parents and staff to view and encourage positive working relationships between staff and parents for the benefit of the child. Parents speak highly of the service provided and the care and education that their children receive. Their views and wishes are currently sought through verbal exchanges of information, although written questionnaires are currently being devised.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced staff and benefit greatly from their involvement and interaction in their play. Staff are well-organised and spend much time preparing activities and resources to ensure that children gain enjoyment and learning opportunities from their play. Well thought out recruitment, vetting and induction procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by staff and committee members suitable to be in contact with children. The staff work together as a strong and committed team. They hold regular staff meetings and planning sessions to ensure that all staff are involved in decision making activities about the organisation of the group and planned activities. This also ensures that children enjoy a wide range of activities and opportunities developed from staff knowledge and areas of expertise, for example, arts and crafts and baking. Regular committee meetings are also held. The environment is effectively planned to ensure that space and resources are well-organised. Children benefit from this as they move freely around their care environment with easy access to their playthings. An effective key worker system is in place to ensure that children are well supported in their play.

All of the required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, carefully stored, well-organised and effectively maintained. They are regularly reviewed and are only accessed by staff to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. The range of policies and procedures work well in practice and are regularly reviewed to ensure that they reflect current good practice and professional advice. They are fully understood by staff and are openly shared with parents to ensure that they are aware of the organisation of the setting. Although staff have recently implemented a system of self evaluation which they use to assess areas of strength and those for further improvement, identified actions are not always effectively managed to ensure that improvements are made.

The leadership and management is good. The parent committee provide good levels of support to both the manager and her staff team. They regularly participate in sessions, helping staff in their roles and monitoring their work with children. This information is used in yearly staff appraisals and also to identify staff training needs. The manager acts as a positive role model to staff, working directly with the children and involving all staff in the planning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff have good training opportunities and regularly attend short courses and undertake formal qualifications. The committee, manager and staff share in a vision of high standards of care and education, in which every child matters. The manager and staff work together to make evaluations of the educational opportunities provided to children, however these are not completed for all planned activities. This means that the effectiveness of activities is not always evaluated. The manager provides clear guidelines for staff and is aware of their particular strengths such as working on a one-to-one basis with children where required. They work well together as a team, providing good quality childcare provision. All staff are committed to ensuring that the needs of all children are addressed and that all children feel included within the setting. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to improve opportunities for children to explore issues of diversity through their play. Since then, further resources that promote positive images of diversity have been purchased and are available to children in everyday play situations, for example, books, posters, small world figures and role play resources. Further resources are



regularly borrowed from a local toy library to ensure that children develop an appreciation of the world in which they live. The provider also agreed to revise the child protection statement to include the procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. This information has now been added to the written child protection policy to ensure that children's safety and welfare is promoted. The policy is well known by staff and openly shared with parents to ensure that they are well informed of the action that would be taken in the event of a concern.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to improve short term planning to ensure that it builds on the evaluation of activities and teaching. Although some improvements have been made to the planning system, written evaluations are not always carried out on planned activities, planned learning intentions are not always stated and there is no differentiation for different groups of children attending the group. As a result, this remains an area for further improvement.

### **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):

- further develop systems of formal evaluation (also applies to nursery education)

#### **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):

- develop the planning of activities to ensure that they detail expected learning outcomes and how these can be adapted to meet the needs of individual children (also applies to care).

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