

# St Barnabas Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	129390
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kim Wailing
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<b>Registered person</b>	St Barnabas 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Barnabas Pre-School is managed by a church committee. It opened in 1987 and operates from a church hall and its associated facilities. It is situated in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. A maximum of children 38 aged from two to five years may attend at any one time. The setting is open Monday to Friday term time only from 9.00 to 12.00 with a lunch club from 12.00 to 13.00. There are afternoon sessions from 12.30 to 15.30 Monday, Wednesday and Thursday only. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor area which is reached by a covered walkway.

There are currently 59 children on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for nursery education. Most children come from the local catchment area. The setting currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The setting employs 11 members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a childcare qualification and three are working towards a further professional qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as staff members are adequately aware of and use appropriate practices which prevent the spread of infection. For example, as part of the children's daily routine staff supervise hand washing before snack. Children's health, if they have an accident, is safeguarded as the pre-school ensures that there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises at any one time. In addition, appropriate documentation to record administration of medicines and accidents to children is kept. Children are offered snacks that include fresh fruit. Milk and sugar free squash are offered at the group snack sessions which the children pour themselves. Drinking water is freely available for children to be able to satisfy immediate thirst. Children who stay for lunch bring in packed lunches from home which are appropriately stored. Lunchtime is well supervised and children are encouraged to eat savoury foods before sweet.

Children's physical development is satisfactorily fostered. Children have use of a garden area which offers ample space for different types of play including, the use of wheeled toys, construction play and imaginative play. This area is not used in inclement weather. However, good use is made of the additional space in the church centre so that children are able to take part in planned music and dance sessions which fosters physical development in an enjoyable way.

The daily routine is structured so that quieter activities, such as sharing stories, are available to children. However, provision has not been made for children who attend full day sessions who wish to relax, play quietly or sleep. Consequently, insufficient attention has been given to meeting children's need for rest.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's general safety as they move around the premises is given some attention. For example, features, such as a well-managed entry and exit system and daily visual checks on the fabric of the building are in place. Children use furniture and toys which are safe, clean, well maintained and age-appropriate. However, provision for children's sleep and for the laundering of pre-school linen has not been fully considered which impacts on children's well-being.

The areas of the church centre that the children use are bright and welcoming. Toys are safely stored and good use is made of low level storage units. However, the lack of coat pegs in the downstairs cloakroom means that children's coats and belongings are left on the floor which presents a possible hazard.

The layout of the areas used by the children and a staffing level that exceeds minimum care standard requirements mean that children are in sight at all times. Further measures, such as regularly conducting emergency evacuation drills on different days of the week are also in place which help children gain an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Children's welfare is well protected. Staff members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection. This is underpinned by relevant recording and reporting procedures. Most staff members have attended further training and are fully informed about the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children of all ages settle happily at the beginning of the session. Staff provide appropriate activities which are of interest to the children based on themes and events, such as festivals. Children become quickly familiar with the daily routine. They take part in whole group activities, such as 'show and tell' sessions, adult-led planned activities as well having opportunities for free play. Staff rotate the selection of toys and resources available to children. The range includes good role play resources, construction sets, jigsaws and play dough.

Staff satisfactorily support children's learning. Planned activities are well supervised by staff. For example, to support the weekly theme of farmyards children are helped to complete a collage picture. Throughout the session staff members are available to support children's play. They sit and chat to children and demonstrate new skills, such as showing children how to build using the nuts and bolts construction kit.

All staff members are very attentive. As a result, warm and positive relationships with the children are fostered. Staff have high expectations of children's conduct and behaviour. They sensitively help children distinguish right from wrong and encourage social skills, such as sharing and turn taking. This means that children gain full benefit from participation in group activities, such as singing and rhyme sessions.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All staff members have a sound knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and are familiar with its requirements. Assessment and planning procedures to support the learning of funded children are in place. However, planning does not indicate how activities are adapted to meet and to extend children's learning. Consequently, staff do not sufficiently differentiate adult-led activities to challenge or extend older and more able children's learning. This means that the individual learning needs of some children are not fully met.

Children experience all six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. Communication, language and literacy, in particular, are strongly promoted. Staff engage children in conversation and listen to what they say. Children sit attentively for story sessions and throughout the term are introduced to other aspects of literacy, such as mark-marking and writing their names. Children use appropriate resources, such as jigsaws, which promotes mathematical understanding and application. This is reinforced by the introduction of topics, such as number and colour recognition. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted by children being introduced to themes, such as 'All About Us' and by staff organising special events, including fund raising Christmas and Summer Fairs. Children are involved in daily physical play sessions which they eagerly participate in, particularly, riding bikes in the garden area. Children enthusiastically join in with singing rhymes and popular songs. Children have an opportunity to take home completed paintings, drawings and models which are stored carefully in colour coded boxes so that children can easily find them at the end of the session.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued. They receive a warm welcome and quickly feel part of the pre-school's community. The pre-school has a well-organised settling-in procedure for new children, which

includes initial visits. This means that children have an opportunity to meet staff. It also gives parents an opportunity to discuss with the manager the individual needs of their children. The playgroup has established good links with outside agencies, such as the local authority advisory service, from which guidance can be sought. Children are allocated a 'key worker' who is responsible for keeping assessment records.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children quickly 'feel at home' in the pre-school. Staff are friendly and very caring so that children, especially those who attend a few sessions a week, are helped to feel a sense of belonging. The staff have created an environment that encourages children to behave well. They deal with behaviour issues consistently, proportionate to children's level of understanding and maturity. Children are helped to gain an understanding of the wider community. The pre-school has a sufficient range of equipment and toys, such as role play artefacts and books, which present positive images of diversity. In addition, the playgroup celebrates religious festivals and cultural events, such as Christmas and Thanksgiving, as well as personal celebrations, such as children's birthdays. Staff lead the children in offering a simple prayer of thanks to God before snack and lunchtimes.

Children benefit as the pre-school works in partnership with parents. The pre-schools prospectus informs parents about the services that the provision has to offer. This is supplemented by the issuing of a newsletter. Information is shared daily on an informal basis. There are sufficient staff members available at the start and end of the daily session so that relevant information can be shared. The pre-school has a complaints procedure for parents to follow should it be necessary. Consequently, parents and carers are informed to enable all to work together to support children's well-being. The pre-school has received many complimentary cards and letters of thanks from parents.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory. General information about nursery education is provided for parents and carers. The current half-termly theme is publicised which involves parents in their children's learning. Parents have an opportunity to ask questions about their children's progress. Children's individual portfolios, which have examples of children's achievements, are available for parents to see and are presented to the children when they leave the group.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the sessions ensures that children enjoy a balance of large and small group times as well as one-to-one support if required. Children's learning is promoted by the varied range of play experiences offered by the pre-school. Children are guided and supported in their learning by a team of staff who clearly enjoy working with the children. Staff attend further training sessions and staff meetings which means that knowledge and skills are both refreshed and updated. Deputising procedures are very good. The pre-school has appointed two experienced and qualified staff members who, in the short term absence of the manager, are confidently able to lead the staff team and deal with day-to-day issues.

All policies and procedures work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment and achievements. This means that the needs of children, both as individuals and as a group, are met. There is a very good liaison between the pre-school, the pre-school's administrative officer and the church management committee which means that any problems are quickly resolved. The church management committee is proactive and members are very much involved in the life of the pre-school. Volunteers, who are members of St Barnabas Church, play an

important role in the pre-school. Their company is clearly enjoyed by the children and welcomed by staff.

The leadership and management of funded children is satisfactory. All staff work together to deliver play experiences and activities which enables children to learn and make satisfactory progress. Both the management committee and the manager make good use of support and development agencies, such as the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) to monitor practice. 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 pre-school was asked to; identify gaps in play resources and consider multi-cultural issues when purchasing further resources, review health and hygiene policies to include administration of medication to children and hand washing, review ways of working to encourage children's positive behaviour and update its child protection policy so that children's welfare is fully safeguarded. All these areas have been fully addressed. This significantly enhances the care of children.

At the last inspection for nursery education a key issue was raised to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to support children's learning. The majority of the staff team are experienced and appropriately qualified to work with children who receive funding for nursery education. Teaching is generally sound. However, further review is required to ensure that the learning needs of older and more able children are being met.

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

Since the 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:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **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 positive steps are taken to prevent accidents in the ground floor cloakroom area
- ensure that there is space and equipment for children to rest and sleep

- provide laundry facilities or adequate arrangement to launder nursery linen.

### **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 planning shows how activities are adapted to meet the needs of older and more able 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)