

# The Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	258305
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Dyer
<b>Setting Address</b>	St Philip's Church Hall Evington Road, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE2 1QJ
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<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Pre - School Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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?

The Pre-school Group opened in 1994 and is a registered charity. It operates from Saint Philip's Church Hall in the Evington area of Leicester City. Children have access to the main hall and lounge area of the church. The pre-school serves the local community.

There are currently 50 children from two to five years on roll, of these, 37 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group is open Monday to Friday during school term times, and provides two sessions each day. The morning session operates from 09:15 to 11:45 and the afternoon session operates from 12:30 to 15:00.

The setting employs seven staff who work directly with the children, of these over half have a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn about good health and hygiene through consistent routines and regular discussions with staff. For example, prior to washing their hands children talk to each other and staff about their hands being dirty and needing to wash off the germs. Staff have attended training to ensure they have a professional knowledge of current first aid practices and first aid reference books and a first aid box are accessible to assist staff in dealing with any minor accidents effectively. However, some of the contents of the first aid box are old and have passed their expiry date, therefore potentially compromising children's health in the event of an accident. Accurate details of children's medical needs are recorded and thorough recording systems ensure that parents are well informed of any accidents their child sustains whilst at the setting.

Children's good health and well-being is promoted as staff are aware of and respect children's individual dietary requirements. Snacks, which include fresh and dried fruits, sandwiches and milk are freshly prepared on site with high regard given to their nutritional value. Staff encourage children to develop an awareness of healthy eating through discussions about the foods they are eating. Snack times are relaxed, sociable occasions when children sit together with staff to enjoy their food and each other's company. Staff also provide children with opportunities to develop their independence during snack time by supporting them in pouring their own milk from their individual cartons and making their own sandwiches, spreading butter and jam onto the bread.

As children do not have access to an outside play area, staff ensure that they plan for physical activity on a daily basis. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of exercise and have created a separate area within the hall for physical activity which allows children the space to develop control of their bodies, by using balancing equipment, tunnels and moving to music.

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

The provision is good.

Prior to children arriving for their session staff work very hard in transforming the hall into a bright, welcoming and stimulating environment, enabling children to settle quickly and engage in activities on arrival. Mobile display boards are also used to display children's artwork and photographs, therefore promoting children's self-esteem and helping to create a child-friendly space for them to play in. Activities are presented attractively in order to gain children's attention and resources are plentiful, enabling children to play together at the same activity.

Security is good as both internal and external exits are kept locked to ensure unwanted visitors do not gain access to the setting or present a risk to the children. Staff are deployed effectively and children are supervised at all times to ensure their safety. Potential risks in relation to the environment and resources are identified through completed risk assessments, which are effectively monitored and reviewed. Children learn to keep themselves safe because they are gently reminded about the safety rules within the playgroup and regular fire drills enhance their understanding of what to do in an emergency.

Children's well-being is safeguarded by the staff's knowledge of the child protection procedures and their understanding of their responsibilities to protect the children in their care. The children are cared for by staff who are vigilant and who demonstrate a clear knowledge of the known indicators of child abuse and the actions to take if they were concerned. However, the policy does not contain current and sufficient information in relation to the procedures that would be adopted in the event of an allegation against a member of staff, to ensure that all staff act appropriately to safeguard children.

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

The provision is good.

Children within the pre-school are happy and settled due to the caring and nurturing support from staff. Staff thoughtfully plan and prepare a wide range of activities to encourage children to develop skills, knowledge and have fun. Staff are very creative in the planning of their activities and have made some interesting resources including a sliding pipe which children have great fun rolling their cars down and mini-beast houses where children are able to use torches to look for 'insects' within the darkened boxes.

Staff interact positively with the children, involving themselves in their play and offering appropriate assistance to enhance their learning and enjoyment. Prompt cards are used throughout the setting to assist staff, parents and students in the types of vocabulary which could be introduced during particular activities to ensure that children always get the best from an activity. During story times children are grouped according to their age and ability in order for staff to ask questions relevant to their understanding and extend their level of concentration and understanding.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children enjoy their time at pre-school and benefit from the sound understanding and knowledge staff have of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Their knowledge is evident in the planning, which covers all six areas of learning, and the understanding staff have of what children are learning from their play and activities. Staff carry out observations in relation to children's progress and link these to children's assessment records and play plans to devise individual targets for the children in their keyworker groups. Staff have a detailed knowledge of children's individual abilities and preferred learning styles and present activities at a level which enables all children to participate. Staff challenge more able children to encourage them to progress further and plan times to revisit activities to consolidate children's learning. Staff have a calm approach to managing children's behaviour and children demonstrate a mature understanding of what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour.

Children form strong friendships and join in co-operative play with each other as they develop their ideas and activities. Children make many choices about what they would like to play with and are developing personal independence through individual routines, including pouring their own drinks and making their own sandwiches at snack time. Most children demonstrate a wide vocabulary as they initiate conversation with each other and chosen adults. Staff support children's language development in a sensitive manner respecting that for some children English is their second language. Children select books for pleasure and relax in the reading corner becoming absorbed in their stories. Children are beginning to learn to recognise their own name and post their name card into a box on arrival to register their attendance. Opportunities for early writing and mark-making are available through the use of conventional writing materials

and painting with water on the hall walls, however, writing materials are not always available outside of the 'writing area' which limits children's opportunities to write spontaneously.

Children explore different materials including paint, sand, water and play dough. Role play is a popular activity and the area, which changes frequently to compliment the current theme, is well-utilised. For example, plans and photographs show the role play area being used as a pet shop, doctor's surgery and garden centre. Children have opportunities to observe, question and explore their natural curiosity during activities such as planting seeds and going on walks to look at seasonal changes. Frequent opportunities are provided for children to design and make things with a variety of construction resources. Children have access to a computer and use other equipment including cameras, torches and tape recorders confidently, demonstrating a mature understanding of how things work.

Children are developing positive attitudes to number work. Counting and number recognition is threaded through activities and most children can count to 20 or more. Number puzzles help them to recognise numbers and children hear staff using mathematical language throughout routine activities. Children are encouraged to solve simple mathematical problems, for example calculating how many children and adults are in attendance. Children's physical skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, for example participating in dance sessions, balancing on beams and climbing through tunnels. During physical activity staff encourage children to recognise the effects exercise has on the body and children refer to their hearts beating faster. Children move with confidence, control and agility and develop positive attitudes to physical exercise understanding the benefits to staying healthy.

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

The provision is good.

Clear and proactive arrangements are made towards ensuring the setting's practice is inclusive and staff show a commitment to ensuring all children are included. Staff work closely with parents and outside professionals to build a collaborative approach to meeting the individual needs of children. Staff have experience of working with children with English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff use picture symbols and photos to assist children in understanding routines and in enabling children to express their needs and wishes. Children and parents also benefit from the employment of bilingual staff members who are able to converse with them in their first language.

Children have access to a suitable range of play resources, posters and books that show positive images of culture, ethnicity, gender and disability. They also gain an understanding of the wider world as they follow themes and projects and celebrate a number of different festivals. The setting has received a certificate of appreciation for their commitment and service in offering a work experience placement for students with disabilities and positive attitudes to others are encouraged as the children follow the good examples set by staff. Therefore children from an early age are beginning to understand and respect people's differences whilst being encouraged to be non-discriminatory.

Staff have a clear, fair and consistent approach to managing children's behaviour. Children are well behaved, play well together and have formed positive relationships with other children and staff. Children have a good understanding of the boundaries and respond with enthusiasm to staff praise and encouragement. Children are able to take turns, with suitable adult support, and show care and concern for each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Positive and friendly relationships have formed between staff and parents, which contributes to children's well-being and ensures that all carers are well-informed. Information in relation to the setting is provided for parents along with details of who their child's keyworker will be. Parents are encouraged to share information about their children on starting at the setting, this enables staff to find out about children's likes and dislikes, their abilities and individual routines. Therefore, children benefit from consistent levels of care and settle quickly, enabling staff to provide for their individual needs.

Parents' views are sought through the committee who meet on a regular basis to plan for improvement and arrange activities, including the end of year party. Notice boards and available policies and procedures also provide parents with useful information in relation to the setting. Regular newsletters are sent home detailing what children are doing at pre-school along with the activities planned learning intentions. Parents are also provided with examples of activities that they can do at home with their children to further enhance their learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a stimulating and well-organised setting where they engage in a wealth of activities. Children benefit from the friendliness and enthusiasm of all staff which in turn increases their feeling of security. Thorough procedures are in place to ensure that children are cared for by staff who are appropriately vetted and suitably qualified and experienced to carry out their roles effectively. Individual staff skills and strengths are also recognised and utilised effectively, for example staff's multilingual abilities. Procedures to maintain staff suitability are in place and include a detailed induction process into the procedures and policies of the setting, ongoing appraisals of skills and practice and the identification of staff training needs. Most required documentation, which contributes to promoting outcomes for children, is maintained to a professional standard. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is good. Children benefit from being cared for by knowledgeable staff who are confident with their own and each other's roles and responsibilities. Staff work well together to ensure the smooth running of the group and organise the sessions to meet the needs of the children in attendance. Communication between staff is effective and they are committed to providing a good service to children and their parents. All staff, including the committee, regularly review and evaluate the programme for care and education to build on their progress and development. Staff value the advice and support provided from other professionals in the field and strive for improvement, this is demonstrated in that all key issues from the previous inspections have been fully addressed.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the setting agreed to extend opportunities for children to be creative, the setting now plans for this on a daily basis always ensuring that there is a range of creative materials available including paint, water, sand, dough and sticking.

At the last education inspection the setting was asked to improve the planning of activities, the use of observations and assessments to support children's individual learning needs and the information given to parents in relation to the Foundation Stage. The setting has made significant improvements in relation to these issues and now plan effectively for children's individual needs, allowing children time and opportunities for children to revisit activities to consolidate their learning. Assessments and observations are comprehensive and clearly inform

future plans to meet children's individual needs and targets. The information provided to parents is informative and well-presented, both notice boards and newsletters are used to provide parents with information about the current themes, planned activities and their learning intentions.

### **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):

- ensure that the contents of the first aid box are checked frequently and replaced as necessary
- review the child protection policy to ensure that it is in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Boards' procedures.

#### **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):

- provide further opportunities for children to write for different purposes.

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)