

# Alban Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	147493
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Naomi Bold
<b>Setting Address</b>	Christ Church, Pennefather Hall, St. Albans Road, Barnet, Hertfordshire, EN5 4LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	079402 99284
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Eve Brown
<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?

Alban Pre-School Playgroup opened in 2000. It operates from two rooms on the first floor of a church hall in Barnet. It serves the local community and beyond.

There are currently 31 children from two to five years on roll. These include 21 funded three and four-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The group currently supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school opens five days a week during term time. Sessions are from 09:00 until 16:00.

Six full time members of staff work with the children, half of whom hold level 3 qualifications.

The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are learning to keep themselves healthy extremely well as staff provide a range of nutritious snacks that children can help themselves to at snack time. Food is a regular discussion point with children throughout the day and staff encourage children to take an interest in the food they eat. Staff use gentle reminders to encourage children to wash their hands before snack time and after toileting and children are clearly used to a rigorous hygiene routine.

An extremely clear food and drink policy enables children to experience a wide range of nutritious foods. Snack time is used as a social time for all and to enable children to be sufficiently hydrated, children have access to milk or water and staff encourage children to pour their drinks themselves, increasing their confidence and independence skills. Children have access to an attractively presented range of fruit and staff take opportunities to discuss the fruit, for example 'Where do bananas come from?', 'They grow', 'Where do they grow?', 'On a tree'. Staff also use a range of positive body language, for example, thumbs up, to reinforce praise and congratulations to children who eat their fruit. One child who does not wish to have a drink is given a little time to think about it and then encouraged to have a drink at a later moment to ensure that they are hydrated.

Staff provide extremely clear guidance for parents on foods accepted in the setting and appropriate containers to provide food in. This not only ensures that children experience a healthy diet but also protects any children with allergies and ensures that food can be appropriately stored to keep is suitable for use.

Children have daily access to a very wide range of physical exercise to ensure their continuing physical health. For example, in addition to the outdoor play area, the setting is able to use the church hall for climbing and playing with bikes and trikes and children take part in 'stretch and grow' sessions, a regular movement session that children enjoy with enthusiasm. Two children have a lively discussion about their 'stretch and grow' session with the inspector, demonstrating the movements they used and describing that it made them feel 'out of breath,' showing that they recognise the effects that exercise has on their bodies.

Children benefit from a very clear sick children procedure which has appropriate exclusion periods attached to it so that staff and parents are consistently aware of the need to isolate children with contagious diseases, further protecting the health of all children in the setting.

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

The provision is good.

The setting has a clear health and safety policy and children are protected by a range of risk assessments that cover all areas of the building and outside spaces. The manager has prepared drawings of each room used, together with a description of their purpose to enable appropriate use of the space available, and to ensure that risk assessments are transparent and comprehensive.

The manager has ensured that all staff are appropriately vetted, for example she updates Criminal Records Bureau disclosures every three years and all new staff have a series of checks done, including a minimum of two references. Staff and children's files are kept up to date to ensure that all emergency contact details, GP details, allergies and medical conditions are

recorded to protect their safety. GP details are kept in a series of places so that staff can quickly access these if required to deal with any incidents quickly. Consents for administering medication and emergency treatment are complete for all children which ensures that appropriate action can be taken in an emergency situation.

The accident and incident files are up to date and all staff are aware of the requirement to fill these in accurately and for parents to then countersign where necessary. Stair gates are in place to prevent children accessing areas they are not permitted entry to unsupervised and children move around the setting with confidence. Fire drills are recorded accurately with the date, time taken and numbers of children present, demonstrating that staff would be able to evacuate the building swiftly, even when their maximum numbers of children are present.

The setting has a clear and well written child protection policy that all staff are aware of to protect children from neglect or abuse. Staff have a sensitive understanding of the confidential nature of and disclosures or concerns and the manager takes her role of Child Protection officer seriously. The manager has undertaken intense training with regards to Safeguarding Children and the law and has taken time to impart this knowledge to her staff team to ensure that they protect children according to best practice guidelines.

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

The provision is good.

Children's observational records are detailed with information given as to their starting points, their current progress and the next steps that they need to take. For example, 'when A joined us he needed a lot of support from mum before he settled. He now joins in all activities and has a small group of friends. We can now encourage him to take part in group games'. Staff use a series of photographic records to supplement assessments for two year olds and funded three and four year olds, however these are not consistently dated which impacts on their reliability. However, staff show good knowledge of the children in their key worker groups and planning can clearly be traced back to individual children's requirements. This ensures that all children are offered activities that encourage their individual progress.

Children have access to a well stocked playroom and there is an additional room used for messy play, cooking and eating. A wide range of activities and toys including a computer, junk modelling, nature table, a varied book corner, home corner, construction and small world play ensure that children are stimulated and interested in their surroundings. They settle to tasks with enthusiasm and a sense of purpose playing both independently and in small groups throughout the session. Staff play a supportive role to all children, some taking positions at stations including junk modelling and a puzzle table, while others float between groups of children ensuring that all have individual attention throughout the session.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals as they are supported by staff who show a clear understanding of how children play and learn and of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Resources cover the six areas of learning and staff use gentle and perceptive questioning to promote children's independent thought and decision making. Mathematical development is particularly encouraged by staff who take opportunities while playing shape games and puzzles to introduce subtraction and simple calculation, for example asking 'if we take one away, how many are there now?' Staff

are uniformly praising of children's achievements and speak clearly to challenge children with new words and phrases.

Children have access to a computer and use a number of simple games to increase their matching and language skills. Children are able to play games that have recognisable characters to increase their engagement in a series of language and pattern games and are each given the opportunity to manipulate the mouse and keyboard which they do with confidence and good control.

A nature table and a range of books provide children with many opportunities to learn about how things grow. Children take delight in picking up a range of natural objects in magnified viewers and discussing their various properties. Staff take opportunities to encourage children to make connections between themselves and the outside world, for example when making umbrellas from modelling straws a member of staff leads a lively discussion about rain and dressing appropriately for different types of weather. This careful involvement by staff supports children's inquisitive minds and contributes positively to their good progress, stimulating their active imaginations.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for by a team of staff who act as positive role models, promoting an inclusive attitude towards all in the setting. Children are treated as individuals with their own care and learning needs and this is easy to identify when viewing children's developmental records. Staff consistently demonstrate a good knowledge of the needs of children in their individual key worker groups and make confident and accurate observations about their progress, ensuring that any learning delays are noted and recorded as accurately as possible. The manager and the setting's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) have recently attended a course to enable them to identify children who may be in need of communication, language and behavioural support, demonstrating the setting's commitment to meeting the needs of all children who attend. The setting works closely with the area SENCO and has a clear SEN policy that is shared with parents. It sets out clear guidelines for supporting any child who may have a learning difficulty and/or disability to ensure that equal opportunities are provided for all.

Children behave with great courtesy towards each other and towards staff and visitors. For example one child offers the inspector a chair so that 'you can sit down with your computer.' Children are encouraged by warm and sensitive staff to develop relationships with each other and readily take part in group games which cements their sense of belonging in the group.

Children are exposed to a number of positive images of individuals from different cultures, including multi-cultural dolls, books and small world play. Children in the setting have opportunities to celebrate a range of religious and cultural festivals and there are many wall displays that expose children to different languages. The setting also takes advantage of parents and staff who speak a language other than English to introduce new words and phrases to children which promotes their understanding of world diversity. Currently there are few resources that promote positive images of individuals with a disability but the manager states that they have plans to remedy this in the near future, with visits from individuals with a range of abilities.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents feel that they are fully informed about the care and education that their children receive. A recent survey done with all parents demonstrates that parents have very few complaints to make about the setting and that most feel thoroughly satisfied with the provision for their children. Key workers have recently begun

making appointment times with the parents of children in their group to make sure that they receive regular updates and this has had a considerable degree of success in improving continuity of care for individual children. The manager has also introduced a new range of diaries that can be filled in by parents as well as staff. Most parents have responded to this more proactive approach and these diaries are able to provide a more rounded view of children's progress and achievements.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by a well organised and experienced manager who approaches daily tasks with a sensible and sensitive attitude. The staff team are able to adapt to new situations to ensure the best outcomes for children in the nursery, for example, rearranging the routine when several children were off sick to ensure that the children who had come in could spend time in a more varied group.

Child details forms are well organised and all paperwork is well-presented and easy for staff to access so that emergency information can be reached quickly to ensure that children are protected. For example, details of emergency contacts and authorised collectors are kept to hand in the main playroom so that children are not sent home with an unauthorised person.

The manager has prepared policy information according to the five outcomes for children, demonstrating her high regard for the National Standards and this is also reflected in her effective practice throughout the day. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of the leadership and management of nursery education is outstanding. The manager has an intricate understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum which contributes strongly to the educational provision that children experience. The manager takes considerable care to research current best practice guidelines and has recently undertaken training towards the new Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, demonstrating her consistent desire to keep abreast of new developments so that children in her setting receive as up to date an education as possible. Planning records and children's assessments clearly demonstrate the manager's attention to detail. Plans are thorough, covering the full range of stepping stones and are adapted to cater for all abilities, ensuring that all funded children's educational needs are met. However, plans also allow sufficient flexibility to allow for children's spontaneous interests to be catered for, ensuring that they are continuously engaged in the learning process.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection several recommendations were made. The first concerns the Local Safeguarding Children's Bureau guidelines being included in the child protection policy of the setting. The setting now refers to these procedures in their policy. Further recommendations concerned risk assessments for the outdoor space and to ensure that entry to the building is secure. The manager has recently reviewed risk assessments for the outdoor area and has taken steps to ensure children's continuing safety when in the outside area. The setting has also introduced a buzzer entry system to their playrooms so that only authorised persons can enter. The two final recommendations relate to developing more appropriate behavioural strategies and to maintain all required policies and procedures to make them ready for inspection. The behavioural policy has been reviewed since the last inspection and now includes appropriate reference to strategies that are age appropriate and the standard of behaviour in the setting

is now high. Also the manager has prepared policy documents that are comprehensive and divided into the five outcomes for children, making them transparent and easily accessible upon inspection. These improvements contribute to the continuing safety and enjoyment of children who attend the setting.

### **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):

- consider increasing the range of experiences and images that promote positive ideas regarding individuals with a disability to increase children's understanding of Equal opportunities

#### **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 photographic records are dated to improve the accuracy of any assessments taken from these

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)