

# Alpha Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113355
<b>Inspection date</b>	05 March 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Maureen Croxford
<b>Setting Address</b>	Baptist Church, Fitzalan Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5NY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01903 717961
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Alpha Pre School
<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 Alpha Pre-School is a long established pre-school group, run as a part of the ministry of the Littlehampton Baptist Church. The management committee is made up from officers of the church and staff from the pre-school. It operates from the main hall and two side rooms in the Baptist Church building and serves the local community.

There are currently 27 children on roll of whom 21 are educationally funded. The provision has procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities, and children for whom English is an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00. Staff work part-time and full-time. Over half the staff have early years qualifications. The pre-school receives support from a mentor from the local authority.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of health and safety issues and follow the provision's health and hygiene routines which ensures that children are cared for in a well maintained and clean environment. For example, staff keep all surfaces and equipment clean and hygienic using antibacterial spray cleaners. Children's good health is promoted as staff remind them to wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack time. However, children are not always protected from cross-infection, as children use the same bowl of water to wash their hands in the main hall.

Children are provided with a midmorning snack of water, milk, fruit and vegetables as agreed with parents and carers. Staff plan exciting and interesting topics with regard to healthy eating, which helps child to learn about the importance of following a healthy and varied diet. Snack times are used as regular and purposeful periods and time is planned for children and staff to be able to enjoy these as social occasions. Drinking water is available at all times, in named drinking bottles.

Staff create opportunities for children to enjoy a wide range of physical equipment with confidence and ease. Children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and benefit from the very well planned sessions in the hall and a small outside area. During the inspection, the children enjoy using large equipment which has been set out as an assault course. All children are developing a good sense of spatial awareness, as they move around the setting with increasing confidence. They are beginning to understand the importance of 'warming up' their muscles before physical exercise.

Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children develop, which contributes to their good health and physical development. They plan suitable activities for younger children to gain control of their bodies and acquire greater physical skills. The accident and medication records are complete and are signed by parents or carers. Children are reassured and taken good care of if they are unwell or have an accident as several staff hold current first aid certificates.

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

The provision is good.

Children and their parents feel very welcome in the provision as staff greet them individually. The premises are light, airy and well maintained. Good use is made of all available areas, including the large hall and two smaller side rooms. The children are very happy as they come into the provision and settle quickly into their activities.

Staff ensure that children feel valued as their artwork is attractively displayed wherever possible. Children proudly show their artwork and discuss their achievements, for example, a child proudly explains the spring picture displayed, which is clearly the children's own work.

The premises provide appropriate space to offer a wide range of activities, which promote the children's development. A small outside space is used to allow children to play in the fresh air. The appropriate deployment of staff and the well laid out room ensure that children can be seen at all times and are kept safe.

Children are able to access their own resources and toys with ease and in safety, as staff set out a good variety of equipment before the children arrive. Hazards to children are reduced as staff carry out regular risk assessments of the premises to minimise identified risks. All equipment is checked and cleaned regularly and staff ensure it conforms to safety standards to protect the children.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff discuss the provisions rules with them. These are clearly displayed to help children understand the effects of their behaviour on others. They are discovering that the provision has boundaries and limits, for example, they understand that they should share the resources. Clearly defined procedures for the emergency evacuation of the building are understood by staff, who carry out regular fire drills.

Children are protected because all staff understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding children. Appropriate procedures, which staff put into practice when necessary, are readily available to parents. The manager is the designated person and staff understand the importance of confidentiality.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy the extremely stimulating range of resources and experiences provided by staff who plan, using Birth to three Matters framework for younger children and the Foundation Stage for the educationally funded children. Staff plan a broad range of activities, which enhance the quality of experiences offered to all children in their care. They carefully observe, which helps staff identify significant steps of achievement, and shows what a child understands and is able to achieve. Children benefit from staff working closely with parents and outside agencies, including a mentor from the local authority.

Staff help children to develop positive relationships with their peers and respect their opinions. Children build warm relationships with all staff, who know them well, and offer them praise and encouragement when appropriate. Staff meet the children's needs through appropriate interactions which helps to promote their self-esteem, including good eye contact, conversation, listening to what they have to say and cuddles. They provide a warm and secure environment in which children are able to develop their confidence and independence.

Children receive many worthwhile opportunities to use all of their senses to explore a wide range of textures and media, such as sand, water, cooking and dough. During the inspection, children enjoy the experience of mixing different coloured water together. They benefit from consistent exchange of information between home and nursery, which helps to secure children's sense of belonging and emotional well-being.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. The staff are well qualified and experienced, and use their extensive knowledge of the Foundation Stage to plan a very stimulating curriculum. As a result, children are well motivated and make good progress in their learning. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals and engage in a wide range of experiences and activities covering all areas of learning. However, this is not clearly recorded and the children's records include few written observations or evaluations of the children's achievements.

Staff complete an initial child profile which covers the early learning goals. Planning takes into account the starting point of each child, what more able children can do and how they will be sufficiently challenged. Staff plan many exciting opportunities for all children to use their imagination. The children thoroughly enjoy using the home corner which is set up as hairdressers. Good procedures are in place for children with learning difficulties, enabling them to make very good progress towards individual targets.

Children are becoming increasingly self-assured and are confident enough to try new activities and speak in a familiar group. They are very comfortable in the provision and have a positive attitude to learning. They play well together, develop very good relationships with staff and their peers, and are sensitive to the needs of others. They co-operate during play taking turns and negotiate which equipment they wish to use. Children are very polite, for example, a three-year-old says 'please' and 'thank you' when offered drinks and snacks by another child.

Children are interested in their activities and show good levels of perseverance and concentration, for example, during story time, when a member of staff reads 'Lazy Ozzie' the group sit quietly and listen attentively. Children have a good attitude to learning and are purposefully engaged throughout the session.

Staff act as positive role models through their own enthusiasm for learning and encourage children to talk about their home and community life. Activities and resources are easily accessible to children, which enables them to make choices about their play. Children are learning to dress and undress independently. They are able to put on outside clothing before going outside.

Children practice early reading and writing skills and are beginning to link sounds to letters. Staff encourage them to mark-make and the more able children use recognisable letters when writing their own name. Most children are able to use a pencil and hold it effectively to form recognisable letters. Staff extend their vocabulary, which results in children exploring the meaning of new words. They visit the reading area freely, sharing books they know well and enjoy. Excellent visual aids are available to children, including name labels, posters and photographs. Staff encourage children to explain what they are trying to achieve and to reflect on past events. Children have very good access to a wide range of books including reference and fiction. They listen avidly to stories, which are very well read by staff, who extend their vocabulary which results in children exploring the meaning and sound of words.

Children count independently with confidence during daily routines and everyday activities. They say and use number in order and in familiar contexts. Most children are beginning to use one number name for each item they count and some select the correct numeral to represent a number of objects. Children use appropriate language, such as 'more than', 'less than' 'smaller' and 'bigger than' when playing with different sized containers in the water. They are able to recognise simple shapes easily, such as circle, triangle, square and cube during the craft activity. Staff support children and encourage them to compare and calculate during everyday activities.

Children receive many well-planned opportunities to investigate materials and objects by using all of their senses. They find out about some features of living things, for example, snails and rabbits. Children use questions to discover and gather information about how things work. They are beginning to describe their own observations. Children have sufficient time and appropriate materials to explore different methods of designing and building using a range of materials and techniques.

They have very good access to computers and programmable toys. They are developing their keyboard and mouse skills effectively. Evidence shows opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the local community and people who help us, including visits from a nurse, policewoman, postman, lifeboat man and the road crossing attendant.

They enjoy a wide range of planned, challenging physical play opportunities, including travelling over and through climbing and balancing equipment. They are able to adjust speed and change direction to avoid obstacles, mount steps and climbing equipment using alternate feet. They are developing increasing control when using equipment for throwing, catching and climbing.

Children receive many opportunities to explore texture, colour and shape. During the inspection, children use glue sticks, paintbrushes, scissors, chalks and pencils, which helps to develop their manipulative skills. Children enjoy worthwhile opportunities, which allow them to use their imagination in role-play, art and music. They enjoy singing simple songs and nursery rhymes.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff provide an extensive range of resources and activities to promote a positive view of the wider world, for example, through topics, such as Harvest Festival, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Good displays, planning and photographs show that children are offered many opportunities to find out about other cultures and religions. Staff use resources including books, role-play and dolls, which reflect diversity to help children appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences. All children in the provision are valued and respected as individuals by staff, who take great care to ensure that all children are included. Children benefit from the very well planned activities and an extensive range of resources.

The provision has excellent procedures in place to offer support to children with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Staff are extremely proactive in supporting children with individual needs, which develops their sense of belonging and their self-esteem. They work closely with parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are met.

Children's behaviour is very good and they recognise the difference between right and wrong. Staff help children to be polite, considerate and understand why some behaviour is not appropriate. As a result, children know what is expected of them and show high levels of confidence and self-esteem. Children show care and concern for each other and play together cooperatively, sharing, taking turns and assisting one another. Staff praise and reaffirm their achievements, guiding their social and moral values.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Parents actively contribute towards their children's learning and development because they are fully informed of the daily activities. The provision implements a highly effective induction session and offers parents and carers well-written information, which includes the policies and procedures, in their own language. Further information offered includes guidelines for parents, a prospectus, a regular newsletter and notice boards. Further information is offered on the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and Birth to three matters framework.

Parents and staff regularly discuss the progress of all children using the children's assessment records. They also share information informally on a daily basis as staff make time to talk to parents. Systems are in place to ensure that all parents' comments and concerns are noted.

Mothers and fathers take the opportunity to assist at the provision through the parent helper rota.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Most staff hold or are working towards an appropriate childcare qualification, and all have experience of caring for children. The on going training programme contributes to the children's development, health, safety and well-being. Staff deployment and their knowledge of child development is good. They work very well as a team and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them on a daily basis, which helps to promote positive outcomes for children.

Children make good progress in their learning due to the experience of the staff who extend activities naturally. Staff organise the daily routines and layout of the room appropriately, which ensures that children can be seen at all times. They ensure that children are well occupied and engaged with many worthwhile play opportunities.

All legally required documentation is in place, up to date and shared with parents, where appropriate, including children's records, register, and accident and medication records. All policies and procedures are readily available to staff and parents and these are updated regularly.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the nursery and an active committee supports her. They have a sound understanding of the requirements of the registration and inspection process. They have ensured that all those working with children in receipt of funding for nursery education have good knowledge of the curriculum guidance.

The manager closely monitors the quality of teaching, which helps to ensure consistency. Staff are encouraged to attend training to meet the needs of the staff and the provision. The management is committed to improvement of the care and teaching provided for the children and strongly supports the staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The provision has addressed the recommendation made at the last inspection. A procedure for the induction of new staff has been put into place. This ensures that children are protected as staff are fully aware of the provision's policies and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and behaviour management.

## **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):

- review hand washing procedures to ensure that children are protected from cross contamination

#### 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):

- further develop the children's assessment records to show greater evidence of observations and assessments, and how they are used to help planning for the child's next stage of development.

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)