

Wareside Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127947
Inspection date	14/09/2010
Inspector	Martyn Richards

Setting address	Wareside C of E School, Reeves Green, Wareside, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 7QR
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

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Description of the setting

Wareside Pre-School is a committee managed provision. It opened in 2000 and operates from the nursery and reception classroom at Wareside Church of England School. A maximum of 12 children may attend at any one time. The pre-school is registered to take children from the age of two years nine months until they enter nursery or reception class. It is open each weekday afternoon from 12pm for lunch, until 3pm, in term times only. Children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area, and have the use when necessary of the school hall, playground and field.

There are currently two children aged from two to under five years on roll, one of whom was present on the day of the inspection. The children mainly come from the local area, and the pre-school welcomes those children who have special educational needs and / or disabilities and any who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school manager has nursery nursing qualifications and is supported by the school's Early Years Foundation Stage leader, who has a nursery nurse qualification and is over seen by a graduate teacher. They are working towards the local authority Quality Standards Award. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. It is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register, and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Wareside pre-school is a welcoming, safe and stimulating setting in which children thrive, and where their welfare and learning needs are met well. It provides a broad and engaging programme of activity, based on the carefully-assessed needs and interests of each child. The pre-school is inclusive, and has the resources to give good support to children with special educational needs and / or disabilities, or those learning English as an additional language. It has exceptionally good links with its host primary school, and these ensure consistency and continuity for those children who transfer to the school's nursery soon after they are three. Parents rightly think very highly of the pre-school, which is managed with drive and imagination. It has a good capacity to continue improving in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- sharpen the self-evaluation process to focus more analytically on the impact provision makes on the learning and development of the children
- further heighten security of the premises, for example, by using a security lock to the setting's external gate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff see the security of the children as their foremost concern. The suitability of adults working with the children is checked, and staff have regular training in child protection. This means they are very alert to any indications of possible mistreatment, and know what action to take should they be concerned. They have made sure that parents are aware of the setting's responsibilities in this regard. Visitors are checked in and out at the main school, and the site is protected with coded locks and high handles to prevent children slipping out unnoticed. A small gate leading to the main activity room is bolted externally. While this ensures children cannot run out, this could be improved further. Evacuation plans are clear, alarms are in place, and exits unimpeded. The pre-school is on the main school fire alarm circuit, and staff hold regular evacuation practises.

Staff carry out daily checks on the accommodation and equipment, to ensure they are clean, hygienic and safe. This is especially important with very young children, and the arrangements for meeting their personal needs are good. Staff also conduct a fully detailed annual risk assessment of the provision, and thorough assessments of possible hazards that might arise during visits off site. The pre-school has good arrangements for circumstances in which a child might not be collected at the right time, or might be collected by an unauthorised adult. With a very small number of children on roll at present, the manager is the key person for each child. In this role she has a particularly close insight into each child's needs, and an easy communication link with parents should there be any anxiety.

Staff are well qualified, and well trained for their work. They are enthusiastic to see the pre-school continue to improve, and keen to undertake any additional training that might bring further improvements. At present they are working towards the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Award. They have implemented the recommendations of the previous inspection effectively, and have completed a very good self-evaluation process, to set out systematically the pre-school's strengths, and its areas for development. For example, they plan to add to their resources for making children aware of our multicultural society, and to ensure that all pre-school policies are monitored, and thoroughly reviewed, annually. However, the self-evaluation has the potential to be enhanced by focusing more sharply on the impact of the provision with regards to the learning outcomes for individual children.

The inclusive ethos of the pre-school is shown in the attention staff give to identifying every individual child's interests, capabilities and learning style. They base their planning on their perceptive observations of each child's reaction to the programme. These allow them to make adjustments quickly and easily, to ensure activities are well-matched to the children's needs.

The pre-school benefits from the excellent links it has with the host school. Older Early Years Foundation Stage children join the pre-school children in the afternoons, and their teacher becomes the second member of the pre-school staff.

This means the staff and children know each other very well, and it enriches the range of professional skills to which the children have access. The younger children benefit from the good example of behaviour and social maturity provided by their older friends. There is consistency between the running of the early years and pre-school provisions, and no disjunction in learning when children transfer soon after they are three. As a result they all make good progress from their various starting points. Parents speak very highly of the pre-school, and its links with parents are a significant and outstanding strength of the setting. Parents value the safe environment it provides, the ease of communication with staff, and the enjoyment of their children. They feel fully involved in the life of the pre-school, and rightly comment on the very good start to children's education it provides.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

A parent commented that, not only were there no tears when her child began at pre-school, but that he enjoyed the setting so much that he never wanted to come home at the end of the afternoon. This is because the children enjoy the activities provided. The warm and accepting relationships they have with staff create a good atmosphere for learning. On arrival they sit together, and say 'Good afternoon' politely to each other, and to the adults present. Although very young, they have already learned they must listen while others talk, and that their turn will come. This message of politeness and consideration for others is reinforced at the calm snack time in the middle of the afternoon. Children sit down together, around a table, and enjoy a drink and a bun or piece of fruit. They chat quietly to the staff, who sit with them, and among each other. They are friendly and well-mannered. Activities like this promote children's social development, and help establish the family ethos of the pre-school. After registration, the children enjoy a story, based on the weekly 'Journeys' theme. They comment on the events of the story, contributing incidents from their own experience. They are good, patient listeners, and enjoy learning new words like 'viaduct'.

The older children gather with their teacher to talk about the newly arrived hamster. The youngest children want to paint. They paint images of the hamster, enjoying the range of brown shades, and manipulating their brushes carefully and accurately. The manager alongside them chats about the colours, and shape, and whiskers of the hamster, and the reasons for its name, 'Rusty'. Before long other children come to paint, and the youngest ones go to play in the home corner, selecting toys to sit in a miniature pushchair, and trying to work out a way of getting it through the home corner door. Throughout the session, the children are involved, interested and very well-behaved.

Staff plans show a good balance of indoor and outdoor activity, and a covered outdoor area allows play even when the weather is poor. Weekly themes shape the programme, but the precise activities of the children vary according to their ages and interests. Every day they have some new, adult-led learning activities, and some activities they choose independently. They begin to hold mark-making tools firmly, and to keep their lines within a page or outline, this demonstrates the very beginnings of writing, and their love of stories and new words will later lead

them into reading. They compare objects for size and understand the words 'bigger' and 'smaller', 'more' and 'less'.

The children also enjoy learning new information about the wider world. After a visit to a local Wildlife Park they could name a range of animals, although some were still unsure which species might appear in a zoo, and which in a farm. Some children have used a simple camera to take pictures of snowdrops, and wondered at the transparency of a piece of ice as it melts in their hands. Outdoor play, on climbing apparatus or wheeled toys, is a very popular activity within the group. The children enjoy learning how to maintain their balance on the outdoor equipment by moving their weight, and by jumping and hopping in different directions.

Staff keep detailed records of each child's progress in 'Learning Journals'. These are attractive booklets with examples of the children's efforts, photographs, and brief commentaries on what the child has learned from the activities shown. They also record when each child achieves important points of progress in the main areas of learning. These booklets are built up as children move through the Early Years Foundation Stage, and are shared with parents. They celebrate the breadth of the children's pre-school experience, and illustrate the good headway they make over time.

The children are careful and safe in handling simple tools, and in moving around the limited space in their activity room. They help each other, are polite and friendly to visitors, and mature in selecting activities for themselves. Helping children become independent is a central aim of the pre-school, which is achieved very effectively. Children know they must wash their hands regularly, and they enjoy the healthy snacks and drinks provided. The social and personal skills they acquire, combined with their good progress in other areas of learning, stand them in good stead for the next stage of their education.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong
Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound
Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are:	Met
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