

# Orbital Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number**

130556

**Inspection date**

26/01/2011

**Inspector**

Hilary Preece

**Setting address**

Orbital Community Centre, Haines Way, Watford,  
Hertfordshire, WD25 7QU

**Telephone number**

07784 573588

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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

Orbital Pre-School opened in 1977. It operates from three rooms on the first floor of Orbital Community Centre in Garston, Hertfordshire. There is a fully enclosed area for outdoor play located on the first floor roof terrace. Access is via a flight of stairs. It serves the local area and has close links with Leavesden Children's Centre and schools in the area.

The pre-school opens Monday to Friday during school term times only. Sessions are from 9.15am to 12.15pm with the option of extending this to include lunch from 9.15am to 1.45pm. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre school at any one time. There are currently 36 children attending who are within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The pre-school is registered on the Early Years Register and on both the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The pre-school provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of child care staff. All of these hold appropriate Early Years Qualifications at Level 3 and one is working towards a Foundation Degree in early years. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are kept safe and their welfare is promoted well. The setting is welcoming and successfully promotes partnership working in order to meet the individual needs of children. Parents are reasonably well informed but not fully involved in all aspects of the provision. Staff have a good knowledge of each child and plan enjoyable learning experiences tailored to their needs. Consequently, children make good progress given their starting points. Monitoring systems overall ensure the quality of the provision is maintained although self-evaluation is not fully developed to identify priorities for improvement based upon all users of the service.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review arrangements for maintaining children's development records to ensure there is always free access to parents and privacy and confidentiality is maintained
- build on the information provided for parents so they are better informed about the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and how they can work

- together to support children's learning and development
- develop a more rigorous culture of reflective practice in order to identify priorities for development and consider ways to involve parents in the self-evaluation process.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Children are safeguarded and protected because policies and procedures are well understood. Staff keep up-to-date with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures through attending training and reviewing the pre-school's policy. This means appropriate action would be taken to safeguard children in the event of any concerns or allegations. Efficient records are kept that show how all staff are vetted and suitable to work with children. A new procedure that prevents staff having access to mobile telephone cameras whilst working further protects the children. Arrangements for the safe arrival and departure of children are in place and daily risk assessments of the premises and equipment are made to ensure they remain clean, safe and secure. The environment is well equipped and used creatively to support children's welfare and learning. Staff are deployed well to provide children with high levels of support.

Relationships with parents are positive and there is clear evidence that staff work closely with them in order to meet children's individual needs. This is particularly effective for those children with medical conditions that require specific treatment. Effective systems are in place to gather detailed information about children initially, which helps staff when settling in and getting to know new children. Parents are provided with useful information about the pre-school's policies and daily routines through a comprehensive Parent Pack and newsletters. However, this does not include information on the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, so parents are less likely to know how they can be involved in and support their children's learning and development. Despite this, parents are very complimentary about the pre-school and report that children settle well and make good progress. Some choose to keep their children in the setting rather than sending them to nursery because of this. There is an annual open morning for parents to receive formal feedback about their children's progress before they move on to nursery or school and there are regular discussions about day-to-day events. Parents know they can ask to see their children's development records at any time but these are not always available because staff take them off the premises to update them. This also means privacy and confidentiality cannot be assured. In the wider context, the pre-school has developed effective partnerships with the local children's centre, schools and outside agencies. This has helped ease children's transition to nursery or school and ensures that children with any additional needs receive the support they need because professionals share information and work together.

The pre-school monitors practice largely through seeking support and acting upon guidance from the local authority support team. Network meetings enable good practice to be shared. They have also embarked on the local authority quality assurance scheme that is helping to develop a stronger culture of reflective practice. The pre-school manager leads a well-established team of staff and

generally has high expectations. Staff feel well supported and are encouraged to develop further skills and knowledge through training and working towards early years qualifications. Trust and open communication enables staff to share their own views and introduce new ways of working. Self-evaluation takes account of the views of children when planning activities and resources based upon children's interests. However, the views of parents are not gathered or used in any considered way as the basis for future improvement plans. This means parents are not meaningfully involved in the self-evaluation or decision making process and not all priorities for improvement may be identified.

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

A well-planned environment provides good opportunities for children to explore their surroundings with great confidence. They can select resources easily because everything is in reach and they move freely between different areas. As a result, children learn to be very independent. Improvements to the boundary fencing of the outdoor roof terrace mean it is much better used. The doors are open throughout the free-play sessions so children make choices about where they prefer to play. More structured adult-led activities are organised for different groups of children and adapted to take account of their ages and abilities. These provide some valuable learning opportunities and are generally of the right length to hold children's attention. Children learn their colours and shapes, for example, whilst playing a game of bingo. Older children listen with interest to 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' story because it is brought to life with the use of puppets and animated voices. Afterwards they use the puppets to retell the story, remembering that the ugly troll says 'who's that trip trapping over my bridge.' Some children show they have very proficient information, communication and technology skills. A group of children work together at the computer, confidently explaining the aim of the game, helping each other and operating the mouse.

Children make positive relationships, behave respectfully towards others and develop good manners. This helps them feel safe and secure. They take part in activities to help recognise difference and diversity such as tasting Chinese food and making pictures to celebrate the festival of Diwali. They gain a sense of place and belonging to their own community through well-planned activities. They enjoy a short bus journey to the local shop and regular walks to the mobile library van. A range of visitors such as fire fighters and nurses are welcomed at the pre-school to talk to children about their jobs so children also understand different occupations which they act out in role play. Outings and visits are also used to develop children's awareness of dangers posed by traffic as safety expectations for their behaviour are reinforced by staff. They learn about taking good care of their teeth when the dentist visits and show high levels of independence in managing their personal care and dressing. They can explain why they have to wash their hands before eating lunch and good hygiene practices are consistently role modelled by staff. Children eat very nutritious snacks consisting of fresh fruit, salad vegetables, cheese and pitta bread. Activities such as making vegetable soup and fruit smoothies are planned to further help children adopt healthy lifestyles and physical skills. They cut up the fruit with knives and help operate machines under

supervision to see how textures change when solid foods are blended with liquid. The environment is set up with different physical apparatus each day so children are encouraged to develop good movement, balance and coordination.

Staff take account of individual groups of children when planning. It is recognised that boys and girls often display different interests and styles of playing and this is supported well. For example, staff have developed the interest shown by some boys in space rockets by introducing many learning opportunities based on this theme. They have learned to count backwards from 10 to one, designed their own rockets from junk materials and used their imaginations to express their ideas in role play. This helps engage and channel their interests into constructive play and learning. The pre-school uses an effective system of observation, assessment and planning for individual learning. Developmental records confirm that children make good progress across all six areas of learning.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

### 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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	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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