

# Christchurch Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	402272
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 September 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Lynn Amelia Hartigan
<b>Setting Address</b>	Christ Church, Ireton Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3AT
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<b>Registered person</b>	Christchurch 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?

Christchurch Pre-school is managed by a committee and a manager. It opened in 1974 and operates from two rooms within the Christchurch Hall in Colchester. The pre-school is open five days a week during term time. Morning sessions are from 09.15 until 12.00 Monday to Friday and afternoon sessions are from 13.00 until 15.30 on a Monday and Wednesday. The children have access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 52 receive funding for early education. The setting supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school currently employs six members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards an early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted effectively as the pre-school takes positive steps to maintain a clean and healthy environment for children to play in. Children are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for meeting their own health needs. They are learning about their own personal hygiene and are encouraged to independently use the bathroom, even younger children do this very well. Easily accessible toilets, steps, liquid soap and paper towels are offered to assist hand washing. A good nappy changing procedure in place ensures children are protected from cross-infection.

Children's accidents are minimised as staff carry out regular risk assessments and several staff members hold current first aid certificates. Children are protected and appropriately cared for if they have an accident as a first aid box is well maintained and well documented accident and medication books are kept. Information is recorded regarding children's medical needs with clear instructions from the parents ensuring they are cared for appropriately. Children learn about themselves and how to keep healthy through the staff's planning of topics such as healthy eating.

Children's health is safeguarded as effective strategies to promote this are in place, such as sickness and illness policies. These are available to parents. Children's dietary needs are effectively met following close consultation with parents. The pre-school has introduced a nutritious and healthy snack menu. Children are provided with regular drinks as water is readily available, although this could be more easily accessible to enable children to pour their own water when required. Parents are informed verbally and by a weekly snack menu as to what snacks are offered, for example, a selection of fruits, cheese, crackers, breadsticks and yoghurts.

Children move around indoors very carefully. They play in one large room and an adjacent room are able to move around and visit the bathroom, negotiating space well. Some opportunities are in place to free-flow from indoors and outdoors, vigilant staff ensure that children's safety is maintained. Children's physical health is supported with regard to large motor development as many opportunities are provided for children to develop their large physical skills. For example, climbing and balancing equipment, bicycles and stilts are regularly available. Children enjoy fresh air and exercise daily and have fun playing in the garden throughout the year, regardless of the weather. They have great fun playing in the snow in the winter.

Children are familiar with wearing sun hats when it is hot and are beginning to understand the importance of sun cream, as the staff educate them about protecting themselves from hot weather and the effect it has on their body. They excitedly tell the inspector and are fascinated to find that their feet feel cold if you walk on the bathroom floor without shoes on but are warm on the carpet.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming environment that is safe and well maintained, as staff ensure the premises are welcoming to both children and their parents. Staff make good use of the limited notice boards to display useful information for parents. The main playroom is very bright and child friendly. There are cosy and defined areas such as a book corner and

imaginative play areas, currently a hairdressers and a camp-site. Children's own artwork is displayed around the room creating a sense of belonging.

Children are kept safe as the staff ensure all visitors have identification and use a visitors book. A secure front door is locked once parents have left and is monitored by vigilant staff on departures. Door alarms are in place and an intruder policy and procedure ensures the premises remain secure. Children use a balanced range of safe and suitable equipment. Some resources are stored at a low-level, promoting children's independence and enabling them to reach toys and sit comfortably to join in. Resources are of a good quality and there is a broad range available to the children to assist their play and learning.

Children are cared for in a safe environment where staff take steps to minimise risks. They are committed to providing safe and secure play space for children, this is achieved by good management of children. All staff are aware of their roles and where they should be deployed. Children are beginning to understand the importance of staying safe, as they are involved in practising regular fire drills which are recorded.

Children are safeguarded from harm as their well-being is cared for by staff who understand their responsibilities towards child protection. A well written policy is in place that underpins their practice, this includes a procedure for a lost or uncollected child.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children appear very happy, confident and independent. They ask lots of questions and respond to new challenges by questioning and using their own initiative. Excellent staff management of new children attending ensures they are managed exceptionally well, enabling them to settle quickly. Staff are very sensitive to their needs and extremely caring. Stories are carefully selected, for example, stories are told about feelings and how it feels to be left alone. New children can relate to these and are gently encouraged to join and talk about how they feel, the use of their comforters are encouraged and welcomed to help children settle. The interactive stories are exceptionally well thought out and managed. Lots of praise is offered and 'buddies' are thanked for their help with regard to new children.

Children's individual needs are met incredibly well as the staff are extremely well informed and thorough regarding their needs, following consultation with their parents. Staff are able to support young children exceptionally well. Planning takes into account the under 3s and is being implemented effectively.

Extremely well-organised and attractively displayed activities are prepared ready for the children's arrival. Children happily engage in an activity of their choice. The playrooms are extremely inviting and fun as the efficient staff ensure they are decorated with the children's artwork, posters, and visual timetable. Cosy defined areas such as the book corner or imaginative play area are exciting and encourage children to explore and have fun. Staff ensure the children are valued and feel very much part of the group, they are exceptionally dedicated to ensure the children are happy and create a most lovely environment in which to play and learn.

Children are having fun and learning as they enjoy a range of stimulating activities. Children are busy and play very well as the sessions are varied and support them in their development, and as a result, their behaviour is good. They have formed warm relationships with the staff who interact well with the children.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning for funded children is good and staff are able to discuss the children's stage of development. Short term plans include evaluation and links to assessments. Children's achievements are monitored through adult focused activities and written observations relating to areas of learning. These are plotted on their stepping stones stepped documents, and are used to inform the planning for the next stage of learning. All aspects of each area of learning are planned for and are covered regularly. Key workers monitor any gaps in these areas.

Children enjoy interactive story time using props. They understand about and respect books. They are keen to take part in a favourite story and staff are skilful in asking questions and prompt the children to think and predict the ending. Children volunteer to help at group time, others are encouraged to sit quietly and listen. These sessions assist in developing listening and communication skills.

Children's creativity is encouraged and supported well, as staff offer a wide range of experiences such as messy play activities, musical instruments and very good imaginary play areas such as a hairdressers and camp-site. Children particularly enjoy these activities and initiate their own wonderful games using the props provided.

Children's mathematical development is progressing well. Number lines displayed around the room assist children in their number work. Some children are able to count competently to 10 and some beyond. They recognise numerals and are beginning to compare. Some children can do simple addition and subtraction, for example, when counting children in lines. Understanding which line has more or less and adding on to make them the same. They learn about weight and measure through water play and using the scales in regular cooking activities.

Children are able to make good use of the outdoor play area and are developing good physical skills. They enjoy climbing the tree stumps and low trees supported by extremely vigilant staff who are close by. They handle tools such as scissors and malleable materials effectively, staff offer scissors within the dough activity to encourage and assist children who find cutting difficult.

Visitors to the pre-school enrich the children's learning and experiences, for example, a visiting police officer, midwife, librarian and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) provide opportunities for children to understand and appreciate how others help us.

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

The provision is good.

Children are developing good relationships with adults and other children in the pre-school as staff are effective in helping children make a positive contribution. Through various means of communication the staff work closely with parents and carers to meet children's individual needs to ensure they are fully included in the life of the pre-school. Children develop a real sense of belonging, they work well with others and make choices and decisions. This contributes to children developing high self-esteem and respect for others.

Children are able to access some good resources that are in place, such as small world figures, a selection of books and dolls that reflect a diverse community and help children learn and understand about individuality. Children learn about traditional days, such as Remembrance

Day, Guy Fawkes Night and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Christmas, as these are included within the curriculum planning. Children are made to feel special, they are given a present when they leave pre-school of a shoe bag and work books in preparation for school.

Children's needs are supported as the staff follow their written policy regarding learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Two members of staff have completed Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) training and have experience working with children who require additional support. Staff ensure that all activities are adapted to enable all children to participate. Children understand responsible behaviour and learn about boundaries as staff are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour. Staff deal with behaviour consistently that is proportionate to the child's level of understanding and maturity. The staff create an environment that encourages children to behave well.

Children develop self-esteem and respect for others by learning social skills, for example, helping each other at snack time or negotiating with each other when building a model with large bricks. Staff encourage children's contribution in a group discussion and children are able to sit patiently and listen to their friends. Children are pleased to be chosen as a 'buddy' and help new children settle.

Children's needs are being met well as the pre-school works closely with parents and carers to enable all children to achieve. Parents are given information in a variety of formats, which includes newsletters from the committee, an information board and verbal communications. Children receive good care and are supported as the staff ensure the parents are informed regarding their day. All staff are friendly and approachable, and discussions with parents suggest they are very pleased with all aspects of the pre-school. Children settle well as an effective settling-in process is in place. A satisfactory complaints policy is also available but is not regularly updated.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with some good information about most aspects of their children's learning, as information regarding the stepping stones and Foundation Stage are available and detailed within the prospectus. Themes and topics are made known to the parents and some suggestions of how parents can support their children at home are made. However, further links with home and pre-school would facilitate and support the children's learning. Parents are aware that development records are kept on their children and are encouraged by the staff to contribute to them. Staff discuss the children on an informal basis daily. Induction days for new parents and children are organised and well attended. Children benefit from the effective partnership the parents have with the staff and the strong support from the committee.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. A 'buddy' system in place is effective in helping children feel part of the group. Children learn about other countries and people's beliefs through festivals and many positive images provided in resources and displays that challenge the children's thinking. Children clearly know the difference from what is right and wrong and their behaviour is very good. The staff are good role models and clearly value and respect all children and their individuality. When children leave the pre-school they are given a present. Their time at pre-school is acknowledged and celebrated. The children's development with regard to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of this group and staff should be proud of their achievement.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The children benefit from a manager and a staff team who offer stability and consistency. Most have worked at the setting for many years. However, they are not complacent and are committed in providing quality care and endeavour to keep up to date with current practice through training. The manager supports her staff in their own development and children are cared for by qualified and dedicated staff who clearly value, respect and enjoy their time with the children. Most procedures are in place with regard to recruitment, vetting and appraisals for staff. However, a robust induction procedure is not available.

Attention is given to the deployment of staff at all sessions and it is evident that staff are fully aware of what is expected from them. They are clear about their responsibilities and support each other well, this contributes to the smooth running of the sessions. Every member of staff demonstrates a good standard of professionalism at all times, are friendly and approachable. All appropriate documents, as required, are all in place. The operational plan has now been sectioned into outcomes for children and is available to parents..

Leadership and management is good. The manager is very hands-on and part of the team, with no distinction as all staff are very experienced and competent. Continuous review of the service provided ensures the pre-school offers up to date practices. The manager and staff team welcome new ideas and suggestions if it will have a positive impact on the children. The pre-school acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses and have identified areas for improvement within their business plan.

The manager is committed to ensure staff are support when attending training. All staff attend regular staff meetings and are collectively involved and consulted with regard to any changes. As a result they feel valued as a team member and supported within their own development.

Overall, children's needs are met.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection the provider agreed to consider providing healthy snacks on a more regular basis. Following consultation with the staff and parents a new snack menu is now in place. Children are provided with a variety of nutritious and healthy snacks. The pre-school were also asked to review the policies and procedures to ensure they were in line with changes in legislation. This referred to learning difficulties and/or disabilities, behaviour management and child protection policies. All policies and procedures are now regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current legislation.

## **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 complaint 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 the complaints policy and an induction programme for staff are regularly reviewed and updated.

#### **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):

- develop more opportunities for parents to support their children's learning at home.

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)