

# The Early Bird Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY362341
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 July 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Kerry Freshwater
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day care, 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 outstanding.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Early Bird pre-school opened in 2007 and operates from one large hall within St. Georges Norton parish church in Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 30 children may attend the setting at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:30-1:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 09:30-1:30 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for 39 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 47 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs nine members of staff. Eight of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Five staff are working towards a further qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean, hygienic environment where regular routines are in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, tables are wiped down with antibacterial sprays, staff wear disposable gloves to deal with nappies and toileting and the water in the hand washing bowl is changed frequently. Appropriate policies are in place relating to health and hygiene and three staff including the manager have completed training relating to food hygiene. Effective procedures and practices are in place to promote children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff obtain all necessary information and consents from parents relating to children's health and diet to ensure appropriate care can be given. Accidents records are in place and parents' signatures have been obtained. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications.

Children are learning the importance of good health and hygiene as they follow daily routines, which include washing their hands before snack and cookery activities and after using the toilet. Children access tissues independently, they are encouraged to wipe their own noses and dispose of dirty tissues appropriately. Children wash their hands using antibacterial solution before snack. They learn about healthy living through discussion and topic work. They are encouraged to eat fresh fruit through fun activities, such as, making fruit kebabs. They learn how to care for their teeth through discussion with a visiting dentist. They view posters, read books relating to the dentist and explore dentist tools and teeth models to extend their learning. Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks which include a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables, bread sticks, cheese and crackers. Drinking water is available and easily accessible at all times.

Children enjoy a broad variety of daily activities which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They gain confidence as they move around on small stilts, they climb in and out of the tent, through the tunnel and down the slide. Children manoeuvre wheeled toys, play games with bats and balls and participate in music and movements sessions. Children complete puzzles, manipulate play dough, play musical instruments and build with various construction equipment.

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

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a warm, welcoming environment with safe and comfortable areas where they can play and rest. They have easy and safe access to a wide range of play resources which are stimulating and suitable for their stage of development. They are enthusiastic in their play and enjoy the range of equipment available.

Children benefit from a variety of safety measures that are in place to keep them safe. For example, one member of staff has been identified as the health and safety officer and carries out daily checks. Termly and annual risk assessments are also carried out, staff keep outside doors locked at all times and monitor the front door when children are leaving to ensure children cannot leave unsupervised. Fire safety equipment is easily accessible, fire drills are carried out regularly and are recorded appropriately. Staff are vigilant and act promptly to keep children safe. They provide an opportunity for children to learn about road safety when they are visited by a road safety officer, they learn to hold hands when crossing the road, sing the 'stop, look, listen' song, dress up as road safety officers and use the toy traffic lights. Children use snack times to make traffic lights using cucumber slices, sliced carrot and tomato on crackers. Children

learn to use the slide safely and are reminded not to run inside. However, children are not fully secure in the outside area at present which creates a potential hazard when children are using this area.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. All staff have attended child protection training and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. A detailed policy is in place and the required government and local authority guidance is available should any concerns arise.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children take part in high quality activities throughout the session. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other. They choose independently and are gaining in confidence, asking questions and chatting with staff and visitors. They play happily together and are learning to take turns and respond to others as they use the extensive range of equipment provided. Children enjoy their time in the pre-school. They achieve well because staff are highly skilled and use their exceptional understanding of early years guidance, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage, to provide high quality care and education.

All children arrive happy and eager to participate. Those who are new to the group are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Close and caring relationships between children and staff increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. High quality adult-child interactions are extremely supportive of early communication skills. Children begin to make sense of the world and express their ideas as they join in a diverse range of exploratory and sensory experiences. For example, as they play with play dough, gloop, flour and jelly.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are captivated and inspired by an extensive range of stimulating, relevant activities which are linked with the early learning goals, their individual needs and abilities. Children are able to access an extensive range of quality resources, which support their learning across all areas. They are eager to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Their independence skills are promoted as they pour their own drinks at snack time, clear away their plates and cups into a bowl after snack and attempt to slice their own fruit. Children learn to share and take turns as they play games and enjoy different toys together. They listen intently to stories which are read in such a way as to captivate their interest and imaginations. Children are able to recount events as they look through old photograph albums, talking about how people have changed and grown. Children and staff work together to produce booklets of recent events which enables them to relate to past and more recent events.

Children are completely engaged in the stories that are read to them such as 'What do you say when a monkey acts this way?' and 'Monkey puzzle'. They use marks readily to represent their ideas. For example, they freely draw and write with confidence at the drawing table, they use the pens and clipboard to record their bakery orders in the role play area and gain pen control as they draw over dotted lines to create circles and zig-zag patterns. Children's language is encouraged through the attentive input provided by staff. They talk to staff about what they have been doing and the things that they have made and are encouraged to draw or write

something about their memories. They become familiar with words and letters as they create number plates, play the 'lemon squash game' where children clap the syllables of their name and play sound lotto where they listen for a noise and select the letter. Children are extremely imaginative. They make sense of the world around them through role play. For example, as they use different food resources, packets, tins, scales and kitchen equipment to bake food in the bakers, enjoy the garden centre area, explore real building materials on their construction site, create dens and buy or serve their favourite flavours at the ice-cream parlour.

Children work well together. They gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. For example, during a cookery activity children help to weigh the ingredients, they count the number of children in the group, the number of cake cases needed and the number of chefs at the table. They measure themselves against the height chart and weigh the play dough and pasta shapes in the bakery role play area. They sort and count the farm animals and plastic dogs, match numbers of figures to the number cards to represent the numbers shown. Children learn to identify numerals as they complete puzzles and create number plates following an interest in cars. Children successfully make sense of the world around them as they learn about their surroundings and other people. For example, they welcome a visiting nurse and explore the equipment used to make us better. They learn about different people and cultures, participating in a range of stimulating activities to celebrate different festivals. Children learn about the natural world as they enjoy a visit to the farm and participate in imaginative activities to extend their learning on their return. Children create books to show their drawings and photos of the farm visits, they enthusiastically push toy tractors through the mud coloured paint to create track patterns. Children visit the post office to post letters home, they take a local nature walk, meet the visiting bugs from a wildlife park and catch bugs and butterflies outside. Children develop their understanding of simple technology as they use the laptop and operate the 'Beebot' programmable toy.

Children's physical skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, including use of climbing apparatus, balancing beam, wheeled toys and as they participate in the mini obstacle course. They learn to control their large movements by adjusting their speed to songs and action rhymes such as, 'we're driving very slowly, we're driving very fast'. Children become aware of individual parts of the body through fun activities. They create a 'person collage' and discuss the different body parts and as they play 'body parts bingo'. Children develop their fine physical skills as they paint, draw, build with various construction, thread and lace and practise their scissor cutting skills.

Staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and have attended various training courses to continue to develop this knowledge. They are fully aware of the learning intentions of the activities provided and how more able children are extended to reach their full potential. Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help them achieve as much as they can. A flexible approach to planning and an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions very successfully to challenge children's thinking and their language skills. They use highly effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

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

The provision is good.

Children are all warmly welcomed into the setting and are highly valued as individuals. Staff know them well and talk to them about their home experiences. Children excitedly show and talk about the things that they have brought in from home, answering questions asked of them about their special things. Children develop a strong sense of belonging and learn about their own and others' needs, through topics and interaction from the staff. Purposeful resources and activities reflect the world and local community and give children a clear understanding about different cultures and the lives of those around us. They begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others as they learn about different festivals and celebrations. For example, children taste Chinese food and make lanterns for Chinese new year, they learn about the Menorah and how Jewish people light one candle each day for eight days. They recreate this using hand prints to show their eight fingers as the candles. Children learn about the Eid festival, making paper boxes to fill with dried fruit and learn the 'Eid night' rhyme. They find out about the differences in the community through a range of factual books and resources.

Children play extremely well together and clearly enjoy each other's company. They are polite and are learning to treat their friends kindly. They take turns as they play together and share resources. Staff manage children very well and have high expectations for their behaviour. They provide good role models, by speaking positively, showing the children respect, talking calmly and quietly to them at all times and this is reflected in the calm atmosphere generated within the sessions. Children are developing good social skills and clearly understand what is required of them. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the pre-school. Staff actively seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting using the initial child profiles, and on a regular basis throughout their time there through parents evenings, informal discussion and use of communication books. Staff ensure that all parents know how their children are progressing and developing. Children benefit greatly from the involvement of their parents in activities both within the setting and as they extend their nursery learning at home. Parents are provided with wide ranging opportunities to become involved with the setting by helping out at sessions, sharing specific skills or experiences with the children and borrowing books from the setting to read with their children at home. This contributes to children's good health, safety, development and learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's care is greatly enhanced by the good quality of the organisation and the outstanding leadership and management of nursery education throughout the setting. Staff are well deployed in the nursery allowing children to receive appropriate adult attention. The generous staffing levels ensures that children build effective relationships and develop a positive approach to the learning experiences provided. Children enjoy whole group times, such as 'show and tell' and physical play activities and smaller groups for focussed activities and stories. Children benefit from being cared for by friendly and approachable staff. The manager, staff and main school have created a strong team working closely together. Staff are clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities, and demonstrate a clear knowledge of the Foundation Stage which results in good standards of education being provided. The provision organises activities and resources well to enable children to make choices and freely access equipment. The recent

introduction of an outside area, creates a complimentary addition to the stimulating environment provided for children. Staff spend their time interacting with the children who are busy, engaged and provided with suitable activities and play opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Staff induction, training and a sound set of policies and procedures ensure that children keep healthy and safe and have a wide variety of play and learning experiences. Overall, children's needs are met.

Leadership and management is outstanding. There is a good, clear leadership from the manager, whose warm and friendly approach is reflected by the staff. They are committed to the ongoing improvement of the provision and their own personal development, meeting regularly to keep updated on any changes within the setting and share ideas. They regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and education and are working towards the Herts Quality Standards (HQS) accreditation. Staff are professional and work extremely well together to ensure the smooth running of the group. The comprehensive induction and appraisal system ensures that the pre-school's policies and procedures are consistently applied.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Not applicable.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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 outstanding.

### **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 security of the outside area to ensure children are not able to leave unsupervised and the area cannot be accessed by unexpected visitors.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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)