

Bromley Methodist Church Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137279
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Inspector	Jeannette Waring
Setting Address	College Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3NS
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Registered person	Bromley Methodist Church Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of 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.

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?

Bromley Methodist Church Pre-school is a Christian based group which is owned and managed by a church management committee. It is located in close to Bromley town centre and operates from

a modern church hall complex. The group has been operating since 1967 and is registered for a maximum of 32 children aged from two to five years. Children are admitted from the age of two years and six months. There are currently 44 children on roll, 36 of whom are aged three or four years and receive funding for nursery education. A total of six staff work directly with the children four of whom hold a relevant childcare qualification.

The pre-school has the use of a large hall and a smaller side room together with associated toilet and kitchen facilities. There is also an enclosed area to the rear of the hall for outdoor play. The pre-school is open from 09:30 until 12:30 Monday to Friday during term time.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

There are good arrangements in place to promote children's health and well-being. For example, clear written policies detail a range of procedures which help to ensure that the premises and equipment are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition, that good hygiene routines are followed and that appropriate use is made of the accident and medication recording system.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene. The good toilet and hand-washing facilities, which are located directly off of the hall, enable children to use them independently and they understand why they must wash their hands. When children were about to line up to wash their hands before snack time they were asked if they knew why they should do this. Many children put up their hands to answer and one child said, 'you have to wash your hands in case they are dirty and if you put dirty hands in your mouth you could get sick'.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills. During the summer months, when the outdoor play area is in use most days, children are able to take part in vigorous activity in the fresh air. Throughout the year staff plan a range of physical play activities in the hall. Children are encouraged to be active because staff provide them with a wide range of large apparatus and organise ring games and music and movement activities which children enjoy. During the inspection children enjoyed using a large climbing frame and balancing beam, older children use this apparatus with some skill and show a good awareness of others. Staff support the younger children well, for example, as they walk beside a child trying out their skill on a balance beam. Children also took part in a music and movement session with great enthusiasm.

Children benefit from the healthy drinks and snacks provided mid-morning. During the last year staff phased out the traditional sweet biscuit snack and replaced this with a variety of healthier options. Children now enjoy such things as toast, rice cakes and a range of fruit. Children are offered a choice of milk or water to drink and drinking water is available throughout so children are able to refresh themselves whenever they choose.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a modern, bright and airy hall. There is good natural light and ventilation and the heating system ensures that children are warm and comfortable. The staff team make sure that the hall is attractively set out with a range of interesting activities, and the good organisation of the toys, furniture and equipment creates a warm and welcoming environment for children. Because staff work to a hall plan children know where to find their favourite activity and this helps them to feel settled and secure within the group. There are good arrangements in place to keep children safe and secure. For example, once the session has begun the external door is locked and access is by bell. Staff are able to view all visitors before opening the door and visitors are admitted to a lobby before they have access to the hall. There are also good arrangements for the safe arrival and collection of children with a password system if parents wish their child to be collected by someone other than the usual carer.

Children enjoy using the wide range of good quality toys and equipment provided, and staff make sure that all equipment is safe and well maintained. Children are able to move safely between activities which are set out in clearly defined areas. Children quickly learn that

equipment should be kept to an area and as a result the floor space stays clear of hazards. Children also learn to help at tidy-up time, and they enjoy helping staff to pack away activities.

A clear safety policy is in place and risk assessments are carried out in order to ensure that all identified hazards are effectively minimised. Regular fire drills are carried out and recorded, and routine checks are made on the fire fighting equipment as well as on the gas and electrical appliances in the building. Staff ensure that all visitors sign the visitor book and all visitors and students are supervised by vetted staff to ensure that children are safe at all times.

Children are protected from harm or neglect because all staff are aware of their responsibility to safeguard children. Some staff have recently attended Safeguarding training provided by the local authority and the groups policy on child protection is in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and Ofsted requirements.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and secure within the group. An effective keyworker system ensures that every child has an adult who knows their strengths and interests and understands their family background. Staff sit with children at their play and engage them in conversation and, as a result, children are friendly and sociable. They are beginning to make friends and they are developing trusting relationships with the staff team.

The regular daily routine includes two one hour free play sessions, and children relish the opportunity to explore the many interesting activities provided during these times. However, the middle section of the morning, when children move through a series of adult led, large group activities, including singing time, snack time and story time, is not effective for all children. At this time some children lose focus and become restless.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan and provide an interesting and stimulating range of age appropriate activities for children. Planning is topic based and staff draw the learning intentions for activities from the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage guidance. Staff record children's progress through planned and spontaneous observations of children at play. Half-termly staff meetings provide a forum for staff to plan for children's next steps and key workers use their knowledge of children's skills and abilities to plan activities which will help them to make further progress along the stepping stones.

Staff are skilled at engaging children's interest and bringing a clear focus to the activities provided. They adapt many activities, either by extending them or simplifying them, so that children at various stages of development enjoy them. The mid section of the session, when children take part in large group, adult-led activities, is less effective at meeting the needs of children at varying stages of development. For example, some children, such as those who speak English as an additional language, become restless during whole group singing time or large group story time.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well supported and children are generally very confident, interested, motivated and keen to try new things. They are very well behaved, polite, friendly and sociable. Many children enjoy conversations with adults and staff spend time supporting children's communication skills by talking and listening to children. The

book corner is well used by children who handle books well and staff sit and read to individuals and small groups. Children have many opportunities to write and draw in a range of activities. Many older children are able to count a small number of objects reliably and are able to recognise and name numerals. In addition the wealth of practical activities on offer affords them many opportunities to set, sort, match, compare and problem solve.

Children are learning about everyday technology as they use the pre-school computer or play with programmable toys such as the Bee-bot. During fine weather children use the pre-school garden and this summer children enjoyed growing tomatoes and carrots. However, the garden is not fully exploited to help children gain an appreciation of the natural world throughout the year. The topic during the inspection was mini-beasts and many indoor activities and stories focused on the topic but children did not use the garden to extend this activity, for example to go on a bug-hunt or to look for spider-webs.

Children enjoy using their imagination as they play in the role-play area or use the small world toys to invent games and act out stories. They are able to use paint, play dough, drawing and construction toys to create their own work and explore ideas. However, many of the craft activities are adult directed and focus on an adult designed end product rather than providing children with opportunities to explore media and materials for themselves. Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills using a range of equipment and in the well planned music and movement sessions. In addition they have many opportunities to practise and refine their small motor skills using a wide range of small scale toys and equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn to value and respect each other from a staff team that is always polite and respectful to the children. Children from a range of cultural backgrounds attend the group and a significant number speak English as an additional language. Staff are aware of the languages children speak and value children's ability to speak more than one language. However, some of the large/whole group activities do not engage these children. Staff are aware of this and are currently seeking ways of adapting these activities. Children learn about elements of the Christian religion, for example, as they take part in the Christmas Nativity play. They also learn about some elements of other cultures and religions as they celebrate community festivals such as Chinese New year.

Children with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are provided with effective support by the groups special educational needs co-ordinator (senco) who works closely with the manager to draw up individual education plans (IEP's) for children. She works closely with children's parents, the area senco and with other professionals involved in the child's care. IEP's are regularly reviewed and adapted in consultation with parents and the pre-school manager always attends transition meetings.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are kind and caring towards, each other and they enjoy helping each other and staff. For example, as the older children hold hands with younger ones on the way to line up to wash their hands at snack time, or as they tidy away at the end of the session. Children learn to be polite and friendly towards each other and they are learning right from wrong as they begin to understand the group rules. Behaviour is very good because staff set clear boundaries and have high but realistic expectations of children's behaviour.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to stay and settle their children at pre-school so that children feel secure. They are given information about the group when their children join and this includes a full set of the group's policies and procedures. Within this document there is information on the six areas of learning and the early learning goals. In addition the pre-school plans are displayed on the wall within the hall for parents to see. Regular newsletters also inform parents of the topics for the term so that they can contribute relevant items from home to support the topic. At the end of a child's first term, at the end of the school year, and when a child is leaving pre-school, a progress report is sent home and parents have space to add their comments. In addition parents know that they are able to speak to their child's key worker at any time. All of the parents interviewed valued the service provided by the group and said that their children are very happy and making good progress in their development. However, some parents were not aware that the pre-school uses the Foundation Stage guidance to plan for children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's health, safety and enjoyment is effectively supported by the good organisation of the setting. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that all staff working with the children are suitably vetted and on-going staff appraisal ensures continued suitability. The small staff team has been stable for a number of years which ensures continuity of care for children. The team work together very effectively to provide children with good quality care and education within a warm, welcoming and supportive environment. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. All required documentation is in place, well maintained and where appropriate shared with parents. The manager and staff have a good understanding of the requirements of the National Standards and associated regulations and make sure that Ofsted is informed of any significant events or changes.

Leadership and management is good. The pre-school manager has full delegated responsibility for the day to day management of the pre-school and is well supported by the church committee. The manager ensures that she keeps abreast of changes in the field of childcare and education and has already accessed some training regarding the new Early years Foundation Stage. Staff are encouraged to access training and four of the team hold a childcare qualification. All staff attend training workshops provided by the local authority. Regular staff meetings help to ensure the smooth running of the group and enable staff to meet together to plan effectively for children's learning. Good staff deployment ensures that children have good support at a range of activities and good teamwork ensures that the session runs smoothly.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the pre-school has improved safety by ensuring that the child protection procedure includes details of what to do if an allegation is made that a child has been harmed whilst at the group. In addition a clear complaints procedure has been put in place.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints 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.

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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 the organisation of whole group / large group activities in order to ensure that they are effective for all children (also applies to Nursery Education)

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):

- review planning so that children have more opportunities to experiment with a range of media and materials in freely chosen art work and ensure that there are good opportunities for children to use and explore the outdoor play area throughout the year
- make sure that parents have good information about how the setting plans for children's learning using the Foundation Stage.

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