

# Our Lady's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	220265
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Diane Mary O'Neill
<b>Setting Address</b>	Henshaw Road, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 2BE
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<b>Registered person</b>	Our Lady's Pre-School Wellingborough
<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 outstanding. 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?

Our Lady's Pre-school opened in January 1999. It operates from a classroom within Our Lady's Catholic Infant School in Wellingborough. The pre-school serves the local area. A maximum of 18 children may attend the pre-school which opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 8:55 to 11:25 and 12:40 to 15:10. All children have access to a fully enclosed area and the schools playground for outdoor play.

There are currently 44 children on roll aged from three to five years. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school currently does not support any children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but does support a number of children who speak English as a additional language.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The pre-school receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

The pre-school has taken part in the Effective Early Learning quality assurance programme through the University of Worcester Research Centre in Early Childhood.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health care needs are given high precedence in this extremely well-organised and managed setting. The premises is rigorously sustained to good level of hygiene by the pre-school staff and the school's cleaning contractors. For example, staff cleanse tables and surfaces periodically throughout the sessions, use separate boards for cutting and preparing food and consistently wear protective gloves and aprons when preparing food and when dealing with the management of bodily fluids. This ensures potential of cross-contamination is actively minimised. Children's health and hygiene is successfully maintained as a high percentage of staff hold a current first aid qualification and there is a rolling programme in place to ensure these are kept up to date. This means that children who require medical assistance are able to be treated by qualified personnel who take positive steps to ensure they are fully informed of current emergency intervention practices and of incubation periods of notifiable diseases. This is further supported by the informative written sickness policy which clearly stipulates exclusion periods for childhood communicable diseases. This is openly shared with the parents as is all documented first aid and emergency procedures which are recorded in line with National Standards requirements.

Children have an exceptionally clear understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This is due to the group's consistent messages of how to stay clean and the reasons for this. For example, staff continuously invite discussions about germs. Extensive attention to detail such as posters in the bathroom help the children to follow and understanding the hand washing process. They have running water and antibacterial soap and paper towels which they independently access and use in the intended manner, lathering their hands prior to rinsing knowing that the bubbles aid the removal of the germs.

Children benefit from a nutritious and healthy diet. The pre-school provides them with a varied choice for snacks and these comply with all special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Snack time is an effective integrated learning experience for the children. They independently pour drinks, share the snack and learn to keep safe as the staff talk about blowing the warm crumpets so as not to burn their mouths. Children's learning is further expanded through cooking activities and staff teaching them about healthy foods. The children remain well-hydrated, as fresh drinking water is freely available throughout the day from a jug and clean cups on a tray.

Children enjoy an extensive and stimulating range of equipment to promote their physical development. Staff effectively use the 'Birth to three matters' guidance to offer the younger children well planned physical activities both inside and outside of the setting. For example, space is organised to enable positive movements such as running, rolling and kicking balls and using paint brushes with water to pretend to do painting. This and more challenging equipment is equally available to the older age children. Children clearly enjoy using the garden whatever the weather. They benefit in exerting their energy and developing their imagination. For example, whilst riding bikes they rode them up planks of wood. The children also pretend to be builders using hammers to do their construction. Staff have objects tied to the fences such as pots and pans which children enjoy banging and make their own music.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where their safety and welfare is paramount to the organisation of the pre-school. Staff are very vigilant when recognising hazards and take positive steps to minimise these. Highly comprehensive and detailed health and safety procedures support staff in their working practice. For example, rigorous risk assessments identify potential hazards to children in relation to the suitability of the premises, equipment used, specialised activities and outings off site. Staff are highly vigilant at recording children's attendance and that of visitors, some who have to produce identification. High child to adult ratios ensures the promotion of excellent levels of supervision. Children have a clear awareness of fire safety protocol as drills are undertaken at frequent intervals. Staff purposefully use the fire drill summary to monitor and evaluate practice to help with further drills as well as taking into account children's ages and attendance patterns. This means all children benefit as they regularly perform the evacuation exercise.

Children access an extensive range of safe, high quality and developmentally appropriate toys, furniture and equipment. These are extensively organised throughout the setting in child-height storage units to encourage children to become independent and gain safe access to their resources. Staff skilfully explain safe practices such as the need to pick up items dropped on the floor, so that other children do not fall and hurt themselves. Children are actively encouraged to help tidy toys away and notify an adult if something is broken. Sensitive reminders by staff encourage children to share in their responsibility for their own safety and that of others. Children have excellent access to a free flow play environment allowing them to make the choice of where and what they play with. When playing inside it is spacious, bright, airy and well-organised making it a happy and relaxed environment for the children. Outside the children have excellent access to a fully enclosed area that is monitored at all times by staff to ensure their safety and well-being. Within this area the children have a considerable variety of equipment that enables all areas of their physical development to be challenged. For example, they can run, climb, do balancing as well as build with wood and other materials, dig in the sand and dirt and use crayons, chalks and paints.

Staff protect children well. Strong recruitment and induction procedures ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. This includes experience and training and vetting checks. Children remain the primary focus of care in this exceptionally well-organised and managed setting. Staff are vigilant in their practice and are confident in their knowledge of child protection, reporting concerns promptly and appropriately to senior staff and documentation is in place to support them in the event of any concerns. The pre-school has a rolling training programme in place to ensure staff members' knowledge and understanding is continually up to date and in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, ensuring children's welfare is fully safeguarded.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children eagerly arrive with gusto and excitement and happily adjust and settle in this vibrant and exceptionally well-organised setting with staff on hand who are extremely keen to make the children and their parents feel very welcome. Efficient and experienced staff are readily available to sensitively support any children who may become unsettled. The entrance area of the pre-school is very inviting with informative notice boards and comprehensive information

available to the parents as well as brightly decorated walls which creatively display the children's work.

Children thrive in this inspirational setting where significant emphasis is given to teaching children through purposeful play opportunities. Staff are highly competent in their working roles. They use their wealth of experience and childcare training to plan and devise a range of inspirational activities linked to themes which children can relate to. For example, photographic evidence shows the children going on a trip to the woods. They learn about safety as they do up their seat belts to travel in the mini bus to the woods. When they arrive they learn about bugs and things that grow and live in the woods. This enables children's learning to be further expanded and developed using a different environment to gain learning experiences.

Exceptional consideration is given to promoting age-appropriate activities. This is supported and underpinned through excellent planning systems. For example, staff confidently follow the 'Birth to three matters' framework for younger children and the Foundation Stage curriculum for older children. This enables them to positively promote a learning curriculum for children under the age of five years. The pre-school uses a key worker system to monitor and evaluate children's progressions and achievements, which are clearly recorded and used to plan their next stages for development.

Children have excellent opportunities to explore their world through various play activities and are exceedingly well supported by the dedicated staff team. Children develop their communication skills as they respond to others around them. For example, the children enjoy playing a building game with planks of wood and working as a team to construct an item within their role play. Younger children are animated and eager to take part in activities, for example, they enjoy taking part in making biscuits and enjoying stirring and mixing and seeing the end cooked result. Children thrive through the excellent support and direction offered by staff as they are able to move freely and easily from the inside play to the outside play. Children learn through the inspiring experiences and are directly involved and extremely interested in their play. Children learn about responsibilities and are allowed to make errors, decisions and choices as they select activities and share their play with others.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are purposefully engaged and highly motivated by the extensive range of stimulating, practical activities related to their needs. They access an extensive range of high quality resources, which support their learning across the Foundation Stage. This is further supported by the staff's extensive knowledge, understanding and experience of the Foundation Stage, which enables them to enrich children's learning and experiences with exceptionally well-organised and planned activities and resources. Staff use a considerable range of teaching methods to motivate children enabling them to learn and make progress. An excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated play successfully achieves this. This ensures children are highly motivated and engaged in a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities.

Planning is based on topics and is well balanced across the six areas of learning and is positively linked to the stepping stones. Assessment is based upon meaningful observations recorded on children's records of progress and staff informally consider the next steps in children's learning to use as an aid to future planning. The consistency of the staff team positively impacts on the children's high levels of confidence and security as they avidly enjoy the variety of learning opportunities on offer within the pre-school.

Children are highly confident and arrive with gusto and excitement and readily seek out their friends. Children confidently find their name cards on arrival and through inspiring play situated both inside and outside enables them excellent opportunities to develop their mark-making skills as well as representing their ideas. Children are given excellent guidance and encouragement to begin writing their names. Children have great opportunities to access books both for themselves and during more organised story telling. Some children are able to recognise letters and link them to their name or everyday objects. Staff know the children exceedingly well and know when to step back and let children take over an activity, creating a realistic balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. For example, the children were investigating bottles filled with a variety of materials, which they went on to copy by designing and making their own filled bottles.

Staff ensure children have extensive opportunities to learn through play both inside and outside. They have excellent opportunities in their day to day play and conversations to use maths. For example, children use mathematical language such as comparison of size when making Christmas wreaths as they chose berries and baubles for their pictures. They sequence objects such as toy animals again comparing size. Children are highly imaginative as they create their own role play when pretending to be builders and using materials to help create their game. Children confidently use the computer with age-appropriate programmes and show real enthusiasm and excitement as they print off their work. They have very good opportunities within their role play to use phones, play tills, dressing up clothes and many other resources. They explore their creativity while enjoying a range of media and materials such as doing cooking, making their filled bottles, painting and using a variety of tools which enable them to create their works of art. Many of their achievements are displayed within the pre-school. This demonstrates adults sensitivity and awareness in pride of children's creations. Children use a wide range of media and materials in line with the theme and time of year such as using shiny, rough and smooth paper and feathers, sparkly bits to recreate the ambiance of the time of year being Christmas. Exceptional emphasis is given to opportunities to promote physical development. For example, children access the outside play area where they can ride bikes, and toy cars, throw and catch balls and run and develop an awareness of space. Staff also provide mark-making tools and opportunities to dig and discover such as in sand and water play and the planting of seeds and bulbs to grow plants. Overall, children make excellent progress in their learning and achieve well, given their capability and starting points.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children from a variety of ethnic backgrounds are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. Staff take very positive steps to ensure that the wide range of resources positively represent the children who attend. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved as was evident during the inspection a parent was helping the children to make Norwegian biscuits. There is a large Polish community in the area and the pre-school has words displayed on items around the play room and some of the staff have learnt some of the language so helping children and their families feel included.

The pre-school currently has no children with learning difficulties or disabilities attending. Staff have attended special needs training and they receive very good support from their local Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) should they require any extra support for children in their care.

Children are extremely well behaved and very polite in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff, which provide extremely good role models and outstanding support for the children. This ensures that any incident is dealt with calmly and with consideration for all involved. The children are highly absorbed in their play so very few incidents occur as the children get on exceptionally well with one another, play happily together and are respectful of each other and sharing resources well. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. This accomplished partnership contributes significantly to children's sense of belonging, security and well-being. Parents are given an extremely warm welcome into the pre-school where staff are on hand to discuss any issues and readily share information. For example, being invited to regular parents' evenings to formal exchange information about their child's progress and achievements. There are equally excellent opportunities for parents to view observations and make their own comments which assist the staff with further developing and challenge or adjusting to assist children's learning. An informative notice board within the entrance to the pre-school and clear information through the pre-school prospectus helps parents to receive up to date information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and 'Birth to three matters' framework. By gaining this information it has given them an understanding how their child will make progress and through the newsletters and information boards how they can continue to support their children's learning at home.

Parents enthusiastically speak of the pre-schools open door policy, the friendly and open attitude of the staff team and their professionalism. They are immensely amazed at the resourcefulness and wide range of activities and resources that the children have to play with as well as helping them thrive in their learning. This promotes the positive relationships which impact on the children's sense of well-being and security within the setting. The availability of informative documentation and notice boards extends the pre-schools effectiveness in keeping parents well informed.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is outstanding. Children's care is greatly enhanced by the strong management and committed and dedicated staff team who are highly motivated to enhancing their knowledge and development through extensive training. The management team are responsible for a majority of aspects within the pre-school, including staff supervision and ratios and deployment, operational plan, staff training and qualifications. All staff have considerable knowledge of the National Standards which they are committed to apply throughout the pre-school. This is further enhanced by their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum to promote a cohesive learning programme for all children under the age of five years. The group continue to revise and perfect their education programme to effectively meet the needs of the children.

The premises are extremely well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is set out in an exceptionally inviting manner for the children. Therefore, they obtain the maximum enjoyment and play opportunities that will purposefully enhance all areas of their development and learning. Children arrive with gusto and enthusiasm and are excited to participate in the pre-school lifestyle and confidently move around the play areas happily talking to staff and their peers. Staff are exceptionally dynamic, dedicated and enthusiastic and work very effectively as a team, moving with the flow of the children where they can actively involve themselves in the children's play. They demonstrate a true affinity with children.

All required records and documentation to ensure the flourishing organisation of the setting and the extensive support to the children is successfully managed by the proactive management and staff team. The pre-school is extremely efficient in providing very informative notice boards and leaflets for parents as well as having very good systems in place to ensure that excellent day to day communication is shared with the parents to keep them fully informed about their children.

Staff are extremely proactive in accessing short courses to strengthen their skills and practice which they constantly review to ensure the quality of their provision remains high. They have excellent understanding and knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum which enables them to extend, challenge and further enhance children's learning and development. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

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

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to develop the operational plan so that it includes staff deployment and how the training needs of staff will be met. Ensure that the operational plan is available to parents. The pre-school has worked very hard at devising and developing a clear operational plan which is now in place. It effectively confirms how they will support and care for children within their organisation, staff's training and overall operational guidance. This is available at all times to parents who can see what facilities are being offered to their children. The pre-school was also asked to develop the written statement about special needs so that it is consistent with current legislation and includes special educational needs and disabilities. The pre-school has worked closely with their area SENCO worker to devise an appropriate written statement of how they will offer support to all children.

The pre-school was asked to ensure that the child protection statement includes contact names and telephone numbers for the local police and social services department, and the procedure in the event of allegations against a member of staff or volunteer. This is now in place and staff are on a rolling programme to update and attend training to help them fully protect children in their care.

The pre-school was requested to make sure the registration system includes hours of attendance of children and staff. This is now effectually recorded in the register as are visitors so meeting requirements of the National Standards. They also had to make sure the written complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator and make sure the written statement on behaviour management includes bullying. This is now in place within their policies and procedures therefore meeting children's needs.

At the last nursery inspection the pre-school was asked to make sure that observations and assessments are used to plan the next stage in learning for individual children. A clear action plan is in place outlining the current position, operational objective, lead person and support, personal and professional development training issues, target date, resources, estimated cost, success criteria, monitor and evaluation. They record weekly targets from the children's observations and fully target monitoring which is carried out three times a year. This successfully helps to identify and target children from the observations and discussion with staff to further assist the children's ongoing learning and development needs. Staff have consultations with the early years specialist head teacher of the infant school and reception class which continues to support their efforts for the children. The success is that standards are raised for individual

children based on better knowledge of each child's performance. The pre-school carries out an ongoing self-evaluation which helps them monitor their own progress and achievements.

The pre-school was asked to provide further opportunities for counting and for children to develop their mathematical skills by solving simple problems. The group put an action plan in place that looked at the baseline understanding of age-appropriate play opportunities to involve the children and staff by use of conversation, problem solving, counting and using other mathematical topics and resources to further extend children's learning. The staff also looked at linking sounds and letters and giving children more opportunities within their play to help with these elements of learning. All recommendations have been fully met.

### **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 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 outstanding. 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**

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

#### **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)