



# The Lenches Pre-School Group

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY331665
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Rachel Wyatt
<b>Setting Address</b>	Church Lench CE First School, Main Street, Church Lench, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 4UE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01386 870297
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Lenches Pre-School Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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 Lenches Pre-School opened in 2006 at its current temporary location at the school hall at Church Lench CE First School, five miles from Evesham in Worcestershire. A maximum of 20 children aged from two to under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. Children are admitted from the age of two years six months. The group is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:30. For part of the school year children aged three and four may stay until 15:00 for Forest School activities. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 17 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for nursery education. The setting serves the local area. Support is available for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six staff, four of whom have a relevant early years qualification and one is working towards a National Vocational Qualification Level 3. The setting receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority. Representatives from the pre-school attend local early years partnership meetings. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and has close links with the school and a local parent and toddler group.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is outstanding.

Arrangements for ensuring children's health and hygiene are exemplary. Children's independence in using the toilet and during hand washing is fostered very well. The inviting presentation of a hand washing bowl with paper towels, tissues and two bins for different types of rubbish, encourages children to manage their personal hygiene during play activities. Staff discreetly supervise visits to the toilet but without inhibiting children's ability to manage routines well. During Forest School activities very effective arrangements are in place to ensure children's comfort and personal hygiene needs are met.

Children's individual care and health requirements are discussed fully with parents and clearly understood by staff. They are scrupulous in ensuring specific medical and dietary needs are met. As a result snack and meal time routines are relaxed and enjoyable for children, but very well managed by staff to minimise any risks of cross-contamination. The staff also manage use of a shared kitchen well, so that children's food is stored in a designated fridge, pre-school crockery and food preparation items are hygienically stored and effective cleaning procedures are in place. Children use play areas and toilets that are clean, with staff regularly monitoring these and taking prompt action to address any issues.

Should children become unwell, have an accident or require medication they receive prompt appropriate treatment. Priority is given to staff's first aid training and parents give their consent to the setting seeking emergency medical advice and treatment.

Children learn about aspects of healthy lifestyles in various ways. Puzzles, posters and displays reflect the importance of a varied diet. Children take part in topics and activities, such as visiting an exhibition about healthy choices, which parents and carers are also invited to attend. Parents are given helpful guidance regarding children's lunch box contents.

Children really benefit from regular physical exercise. Children play outside daily, except in very poor weather, or indoors on the climbing frame. They take part in frequent music and movement sessions. Children really enjoy being outdoors, using a range of wheeled toys and trikes, throwing and rolling balls, and playing with sand and water. Creative and imaginative play are also offered outside. Regular Forest School activities give three and four-year-olds rewarding physical challenges. Children are protected from the elements during hot and inclement weather. The group works with parents to ensure children wear appropriate clothing depending on the season and have suitable sun protection, such as wearing hats, sun cream and using shaded areas.

Children are very well nourished. They have healthy snacks of fruit and raisins. They try different foods during cookery sessions, such as bread or star biscuits, and taste pumpkin soup brought in by children to illustrate the day's topic and story. Children's individual dietary needs are clearly understood and supported. Snack and lunch times are sociable and relaxed. Tables are invitingly set up for snack time, with picture prompts to illustrate which is the 'juice' and which is the 'milk' table. Children help with passing round fruit and clear away their cups and plates after meals. At lunch time they manage the contents of their lunch boxes well, aided by staff who sit with them. Everyone's commitment to eating healthy foods is evident from the varied contents of both children's and staff's meals.

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

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given high priority. Staff are vigilant about ensuring the premises are secure and free from hazards. Robust risk assessments and associated guidance help them to achieve this. Arrival and departure times are well managed and children have a sound understanding of specific safety issues relating to outdoor activities. Even the youngest children explain they must not go over, under or around the blue rope boundary used for outside play and Forest School. Children learn about road safety and safety in woodland during outings and Forest School activities. They handle tools, such as scissors and knives correctly, and use very good quality, age-appropriate equipment, which is safely stored and maintained in good condition.

Children are protected from harm. Staff understand their responsibility for ensuring children are protected in line with the setting's policy. Robust arrangements are in place to ensure all personnel involved in children's care and the management of the setting are vetted. Arrival and departure times are well managed so that children are handed over to the correct person. Children's existing injuries are discussed and recorded. Parents are made aware of the setting's responsibility for safeguarding children through information displayed on the notice board. Staff have access to up-to-date guidance on safeguarding children, but the group's policy contains some inconsistencies regarding the management of allegations against staff or volunteers. This potentially compromises children's welfare in such situations.

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

The provision is outstanding.

All children love being at the pre-school. They soon settle and take a full part in all the wonderful activities and experiences carefully planned and set out by the staff. Children really benefit from well thought out activities and resources which enrich their understanding, for example during the current topics featuring aspects of autumn. Books, displays and a wide range of toys and equipment bring topics to life and give all children 'hands-on' experiences. Younger children relish the choice, practical activities and plenty of creative, exploratory and imaginative play. Planning and assessment incorporates children's needs and reflects the ethos of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. All adults relate really well to the children. They adapt their approaches and support according to each child's level of understanding and ability.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are offered a range of most rewarding activities and topics. These are carefully planned and very well presented. Children clearly appreciate the choices available to them which staff explain well. The excellent range of meaningful resources, often linked to the topic, capture children's interest and imagination. They are purposeful, concentrate well and readily make decisions on where and how they want to play and explore. Staff are very supportive in enriching and extending children's play and learning as additional toys and equipment are ready to hand, for example, to further develop their artwork, exploratory play or mark making.

Children are articulate and confident speakers, encouraged by the adults' effective explanations and meaningful conversation. Children express themselves clearly, readily joining in discussions and answering questions. They listen and respond very well to stories. Children really enjoy looking at books in the comfortable 'quiet' area. They handle books well, discussing pictures and stories with friends or contentedly turning pages on their own. Children have good pencil control, relishing the many opportunities for mark making, drawing and painting, including chalking and 'water painting' outside. Older children are writing their names and others form recognisable letters. Staff encourage children's appreciation of print and letter sounds, writing down children's comments for them on their work. Children are all making very good progress in recognising their own names, for example self-selecting their name card at hand washing and snack time.

Children's appreciation of numbers, counting and mathematical terms are fostered very well in practical contexts. Each morning children take it in turns to count how many of them are present. They use a range of toys or items, such as conkers to compare numbers. Good use of visual prompts, such as a colourful number line or four 'smiley' faces on the sand and water trays to limit numbers playing there, help children to appreciate numbers in practical contexts. Entertaining action rhymes introduce them to simple number problems and staff effectively support children's understanding of size, shape, weight and measure. Children learn about quantity and weight through enjoyable cooking activities. They then consolidate their learning, for example during exploratory and role play. Containers for pouring and comparing amounts are regularly available in the sand and water trays, and children routinely use tape measures to measure equipment or the playground gate.

Children are curious and observant. Sand and water are available daily and they enjoy finding out the different properties of wet or dry sand or experimenting with dough. Attending Forest School activities gives them a great opportunities to investigate and examine features of their local environment and seasonal changes. During discussions children show their interest in and awareness of the weather. Staff carefully select resources, such as books and puzzles, and set up activities to further develop children's appreciation of autumn. Children listen to a story about pumpkin soup and taste some soup brought in by their friends. They are busy in the role play area, enjoying the 'forest scene' set up under a 'cargo' net with cuddly toy woodland animals, a picnic and an assortment of leaves and twigs. A large scale laminated 'map' of the Forest School site with various visual symbols of natural features is often used to encourage children's design and recall. Gravel, stones and, at the moment, conkers are popular additions to activities, the former adding reality to the 'building site' small world scene.

Children like to find out how things work. Small world construction and imaginative play scenarios, such as the 'castle' and 'building' site are popular. Children concentrate well as they fix different 'bricks' together or move wheeled toys around, digging up gravel, pebbles or sand. Their outside play on wheeled toys is enriched by the use of cones, petrol pumps, traffic lights and access to a crane and a wide range of tools. They handle tools well, competently managing scissors. Children are physically confident and energetic, as a result of regular outdoor activities, music and movement sessions and through the challenges presented during Forest School.

Children are imaginative and creative. They engage in purposeful, sustained role play. Staff create inviting role play areas, such as a bread shop, hospital and woodland scene. Children enjoy dressing up, for example as doctors and nurses, tending to their willing 'patients'. They draw, paint and colour expressively, using different medium and techniques.

Children's learning is supported by excellent teaching. A most capable and supportive staff team, assisted by parents and volunteers, create a stimulating learning environment for them. A worthwhile range of well-resourced activities and topics capture children's interest and imagination. Consistent monitoring and assessment of children's progress results in staff having a clear vision of each child's learning needs. Plans incorporate children's differing needs, identifying how their learning will be consolidated or moved on to the next stage.

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

The provision is good.

Children's appreciation of diversity is fostered through enjoyable activities focussing on festivals, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year, and through access to rewarding books, puzzles and toys which reflect positive images.

Children's needs are clearly understood and well met by staff. Robust arrangements are in place for ensuring any specific care and learning needs are fully discussed with parents and met within the setting. Should staff have any concerns about a child's progress, these are raised sensitively with parents and strategies agreed. The group has well-defined procedures for supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children are well behaved. They relish opportunities for choice and respond well to staff's high expectations. This is reflected in the way they readily repeat and abide by rules for safe play when outside or attending Forest School. Children understand about sharing and turn taking, aided by gentle reminders from staff. Children's good behaviour and positive self-esteem is promoted by the staff's praise and everyone's acknowledgement of their achievements. Good use of photographs and prompts, such as a large egg timer to encourage turn taking, also help children to remember rules and appropriate behaviour at different activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents make a valuable contribution to the life of the setting. They serve on the management committee, supporting the staff in the smooth running of the pre-school. Parents' and carers' views on their own children are consistently warmly welcomed and help staff to ensure children are well cared for. Children's play is enriched through the involvement of parents and other volunteers in sessions, and through the items they provide for activities and topics.

Parents are very well informed about the provision. An easy to read, informative prospectus and good settling in arrangements help to reassure children and parents and enable them to get to know staff and daily routines. Regular newsletters and additional information in letters, ensure parents are kept up to date. Displays and information on notice boards give further guidance on aspects of their children's care and play, as well as information about other child care matters. Parents appreciate regular informal exchanges of information with staff. Key policies are summarised in the prospectus or on the notice board and parents can access a full set of policies if they wish. They have been given appropriate guidance on how to make a complaint and feel confident to approach key pre-school personnel should they have any concerns. However, parents are not fully aware of their rights as the policy does not outline timescales for written responses or the current requirements relating to associated record keeping.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Through the prospectus, additional letters and displays, parents are fully informed about the setting and given a very good insight into the Foundation Stage. Topics and Forest School activities are clearly explained so that parents have a good idea about the types of activities their children will be involved in. Good use of photographic evidence helps parents to appreciate the range of their children's experiences.

Parents are actively involved in their children's learning. They provide items and help in sessions. A parent makes soup to illustrate the story; others have helped their children collect items to use in the group or to show to the children, enhancing everyone's awareness of autumn. Nearer the time when children are due to move onto school, parents are given very helpful hints on ways to prepare their children for this change. Parents and carers also make valuable contributions to the group's assessment procedures. Their comments on their child's early years profile helps staff with their initial baseline assessments of children's progress. Regular exchanges between parents and staff ensure that everyone is well informed about children's skills and interests, which helps staff to plan relevant topics and activities.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being looked after by a very well organised and capable team. The staff are dedicated, hardworking and clearly understand their roles. They ensure consistency and continuity for all children. They are supported by enthusiastic parents and volunteers who help in sessions and serve on the committee. The current management team have just been elected and are keen to seek other parents' views and to support the staff. Very robust vetting procedures ensure that everyone involved in the organisation and management of the setting is suitable.

Children and their families enter a most welcoming pre-school room. Activities are well planned and invitingly laid out. Excellent resources stimulate and sustain the children's interest. Sessions are enjoyable and run smoothly. Documents and records are well organised to support children's care and welfare. These include helpful operational plans and guidance, plus all relevant policies.

The leadership and management of funded children is outstanding. Children's nursery education is of high quality as the staff create a most inviting learning environment and provide excellent

support for children. Parents and volunteers also contribute positively to children's learning. All adults have access to helpful guidance and prompts to help children get the most out of activities and experiences.

Children's individual learning needs are clearly understood, due to very good communication between staff and parents, and as a result of the staff's ongoing evaluations of activities and procedures. These, together with the adults' enthusiasm for new ideas and ongoing personal development and training, means that children's play and learning is consistently enhanced and enriched. This is particularly evident in the contribution outdoor activities, including Forest School, have made to developing children's confidence, their physical ability and their imagination. Overall children's needs are met.

### **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):

- improve procedures relating to managing allegations against staff or volunteers so that these reflect local guidance on safeguarding children
- improve knowledge of current requirements for managing and recording any complaints so that parents can be made fully aware of their rights.

#### **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)