



Burwell Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221552
Inspection date	03 March 2006
Inspector	Denise May Smith
Setting Address	Burwell Early Learners, Burwell Village College Site, The Causeway, Burwell, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB5 0DU
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Registered person	Burwell Early Learners
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?

Burwell Early Learners opened in 2001 following the merger of two long-established groups, Burwell Community Nursery and Burwell Pre-School Playgroup. It moved to its present purpose built accommodation in January 2004 and has three rooms, two of which accommodate the funded children. The building is located on the site of the village college in Burwell and serves the local area.

A maximum of 72 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group

opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 - 11.45 and 13.00 - 15.30. There is an optional lunch facility for pre-school children. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 142 children on roll. Of these 74 children receive funding for nursery education. The nursery provides care for children aged 16 months to under 5 years of age.

The pre-school employs 20 staff to work with the children. Ten of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications, one is working towards a qualification and three are due to start their training.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well. They are protected from the risk of cross infection because staff follow appropriate routines, such as ensuring tables are cleaned prior to children eating and following good, hygienic nappy changing procedures. Parents are informed about infectious illnesses through pre-school notices and this ensures children are protected. Accidents receive appropriate treatment and well equipped first aid kits are within easy reach.

Children's dietary needs are met as staff know the children well and collect necessary information from parents so that any allergies or special dietary needs are catered for. Snack times are organised differently depending on the age of the children. A running-snack-bar system has recently been introduced for the oldest children giving them the opportunity to choose when they wish to eat. The younger children in the pre-school rooms sit together with staff. Whilst this is a social time, children tend to have to wait a long time for their snack until everyone washes their hands and sits down. The youngest children are provided with non-spill cups and are well supported by the staff. Drinks do not tend to be available at all times in any of the rooms. The lunch club provides children with an opportunity to enjoy the lunch, which their parents or carers have provided within the social setting of the group.

All children benefit from fresh air daily as they play in the large outdoor play area. They enjoy a wide range of experiences, such as pedalling bikes and wheeled toys or playing on the static climbing equipment where they gain confidence using equipment that provides physical challenge.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure because appropriate procedures are followed. For example, the front entrance is kept locked and visitors to the group ring a bell to alert staff of their presence. Appropriate procedures are in place relating to 'who' may

collect the children contributing to their well-being. Assessments are undertaken to minimise risks to children and static outdoor play equipment is fenced to prevent the youngest children having access as it is not developmentally suitable for them.

Children move around freely in a well-organised environment, where good use of space ensures children make the best use of the rooms. Children are encouraged to help put toys away when they have finished with them, so that they have space to play safely. Sound recording systems ensure that parents are informed of accidents, incidents or injuries their child sustains whilst at the setting and regular fire evacuation practices enable children to learn about keeping themselves safe. However, these are not evaluated to inform practice.

The warm and welcoming building ensures children enter with enthusiasm and settle well to their activities. Children play with a vast range of resources and equipment that are suitable for the age range. These are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they are safe, clean and in good condition.

Children are protected because staff are secure in their knowledge of child protection and have a good understanding of the local Area Child Protection Procedures. Sufficient staff have current first aid training so children receive appropriate treatment in the event of an accident.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and are developing their self-esteem across the setting. All children have their individual needs met and are developing a good range of knowledge and skills. Children develop good relationships with staff, which contributes to their positive attitude to learning. All children who attend the group are offered developmentally appropriate activities and resources, which support their learning in a 'fun,' interesting manner. Staff know and understand the children well, enabling them to play and learn at their own pace. Children are engaged in the opportunities available and learn effortlessly through their play.

Children arrive eager to participate settling quickly into their rooms. Good ranges of stimulating activities enable them to participate in new experiences, such as the youngest children exploring the texture of cold baked beans or jelly. The supervisor who works with these youngest children seeks relevant information from parents or carers to establish their likes and dislikes but, this information is not recorded neither is a base line of what children know and can do. She plans activities using the 'Birth to three matters' framework and is beginning to assess children's development using these aspects of learning. This is an onerous task for one person to manage effectively. Children transfer to the pre-school rooms at approximately 2 ½ years, but future assessments of their learning are not generally stated again until they reach 3 years old when they are assessed using the foundation profile.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children are confident, active and approach their learning with enthusiasm. They are

keen to share their experiences with staff and each other and show good relationships as they play together harmoniously. They maintain attention well, concentrate and listen carefully, for example, when listening to stories in a large group. Staff are experienced and have a sound knowledge and understanding of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. This knowledge means that staff lead activities that challenge children appropriately. Staff are a little unsure of the new system of planning and assessment which is being piloted in the pre-school rooms. It is the responsibility of the room supervisors to plan and assess the progress of all of the children, making it an onerous task to manage effectively.

Staff successfully weave all areas of learning through the daily routine and activities. The rooms are equipped with an excellent range of low, child friendly storage units. However, children are not generally encouraged to independently access the toys limiting their ability to make choices in their play. Staff effectively use 'children's interests as vehicles' so that all children can be engaged.

Children are given many opportunities to be creative in their art and craft. Some activities are topic related, such as craft activities relating to the Chinese New Year, but others such as free painting allow children to use their imaginations to express themselves. The children cannot at present freely access other creative materials such as glitter, glue and sequins, which limits this aspect of their creativity. Children's opportunities to explore and investigate man-made objects and natural resources are good, such as an activity where children use spoons to fill small bottles with dry porridge oats. This play led to the children organising a role play game of 'doctors and nurses', 'who' was going to be the patient needing the 'medicine' and 'who' was going to be the doctor. Other role play opportunities are good and support different areas of learning because basic technology and writing equipment are provided to support the play.

Computers are available for both sets of pre-school children. However, neither were used during the inspection and as one is kept in an adjoining room it is difficult for children to access it independently. Children are developing an understanding of numbers, shape and size during all activities. Simple calculating concepts such as one more and one less are introduced through books and familiar rhymes. Children communicate well with adults and each other. They enjoy books, reading together and listen to stories. Very good use is made of reference books to support learning. The toy boxes in one of the pre-school rooms are not labelled and so do not help to promote children's early word recognition skills. More able children are able to recognise some letter sounds and link these to words. Children's early writing skills are effectively promoted as they practise these skills in a variety of everyday situations. The use of worksheets in the pre-school rooms is neither effective or developmentally appropriate.

Children have good opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors and out all year around and use a good range of resources to promote fine motor skills such as cutters, rollers and scissors. Children are developing a good sense of self and place in the local community and the wide world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff ensure they are available to greet the children and make them feel welcome as they arrive at the setting. Good settling in procedures ensure children are secure and confident. Staff develop positive relationships with the children and praise their achievements well, which promotes their confidence and self-esteem. The environment is made friendly with 'friezes and posters', but few examples of children's own art work are displayed.

Children's behaviour is good. They share and take turns and show concern for others. They play happily together and delight in cooperative play, such as, 'working together to make a two people wheeled toy move along'. Children interact confidently with adults and each other as they organise their play or share their news. The provision fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's individual needs are met as the setting gathers clear information to meet these needs contributing to their well-being. Children have access to a good range of suitable resources which help them to understand about their differences and similarities and those that promote a positive view of the wider world. This means that children are able to learn about diversity. Good systems are in place to support children with special needs. This ensures that all children are able to participate in activities and that their needs are respected. Parents' and carers' views and ideas are valued by the setting. Questionnaires are used to ensure the group is offering what parents want for their children. Parents are provided with regular newsletters about the setting keeping them informed about the care offered.

The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good.

Parents are informed about the topics and daily activities their children are taking part in, but are not given ideas of how to extend their children's learning at home, such as providing the words for new songs. Although staff share information with parents and carers about children's general progress and well-being, there is not a formal process for them to contribute to the assessments of children's learning or share how their children are progressing towards the early learning goals.

Basic information about the six areas of learning and the Foundation Stage curriculum is provided, although parents spoken to during the inspection are unclear about this area. An open evening and a parent's consultation evening are held each year to help keep parents informed about what the setting offers.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The committee is extremely supportive of the staff and the group as a whole. The members are actively involved in all aspects of the setting and share the work load effectively. The good organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for. However, the way in which the children are divided up between the three rooms

means that the supervisors in the pre-school rooms are both independently planning for both three, and four year olds. This increases the workload unnecessarily. The younger children in these rooms fall between two planning and assessment systems, so their particular needs are not planned for.

There are sufficient qualified and suitable staff to meet the needs of all the children for whom the setting provides care. Staff have a good understanding of how children learn. For example, children have lots of opportunities to learn through the provision of fun, appropriate, well paced activities. They use their senses to explore and investigate and their own ideas and imaginations in their play. The group benefits from a consistent staff team. However, as there is no 'key worker' system in operation the work load of assessing, identifying the next steps of learning and planning in order to meet these needs falls to the room supervisors. This limits the development of the rest of the staff team and makes it a difficult process to manage effectively.

There is an effective system of staff appraisals in place and an overview maintained of training needs. As a result areas for professional development are given appropriate attention with the exception of training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework in the pre-school rooms. The manager has undertaken training in all the key roles, which means her role is large and again limits the development of the other staff members. Documentation is well maintained. Policies and procedures are in place and revised as appropriate. They mostly comply with current legislation and promote children's well being.

Overall, the setting meets the needs of the children who attend.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good.

There are systems in place to ensure that the organisation of time, and the range and quality of activities for all children who receive funding is effective; this has a positive effect on their learning and development. Management ensure that the staff, who work with the children in receipt of funding for nursery education have the appropriate knowledge and skills in order to help children achieve well.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last 'care' inspection the committee agreed to, ensure that regular risk assessments are undertaken on the premises. These are now completed as routine in a variety of ways, improving the safety of the premises. They also agreed to update policies to include: Ofsted's details in the complaints policy and the procedures to follow in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff. Both of these policies have been amended; the complaints procedure is in the process of being amended again in line with the latest guidelines. Parents and staff are now informed of the new procedures to be followed.

At the last 'Nursery Education' inspection the committee agreed to, provide opportunities for children to count, compare numbers and develop an understanding of calculation through practical activities and routines. These aspects of mathematics

are now effectively woven throughout the activities offered.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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

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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):

- ensure the way in which the children are organisation between the three rooms meets all of the children's needs. Make sure that staff are able to effectively meet children's individual needs for example by introducing a 'key-worker' system
- develop opportunities for children to make choices in their play, for example, by making sure that all of the toy boxes are clearly labelled and that children are encouraged and understand that it is permitted for them to access toys independently

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):

- ensure that the system for assessing what children know and can do is based on a starting point and identifies their individual next steps of learning. Ensure that these next steps are used to inform future planning and that this is evaluated to ensure activities are effective. Also relates to Enjoying and Achieving 'care'
- improve the quality of the information given to parents or carers regarding the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones children

take to achieve them. Enable parents to contribute to their children's assessments, share the identified next steps of learning and provide ideas so that they can support their children at home with the current areas of learning being studied.

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