



Brook Green Early Years

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY316345
Inspection date 20 March 2006
Inspector Rachael Williams

Setting Address Hillside Children's Centre, Eastwick Road, Taunton, Somerset,
TA2 7HU

Telephone number

E-mail

Registered person Brook Green Early Years

Type of inspection Integrated

Type of care 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

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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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Brook Green Early Years is a committee run group operating from Hillside Children's Centre in Taunton, Somerset. They operate from purpose-built accommodation within the Centre. Children have access to a large, bright room, a smaller room to accommodate younger children and babies, child sized toilet facilities and a fully enclosed outdoor area. Children have regular visits to the local shops, library and adjacent park.

The group is open daily, throughout the year, from 08:00 until 18:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions. At present, there are 58 children on roll. There are 30 children receiving funding for nursery education. The group support children with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs.

The committee and a super numerate supervisor support 7 staff who work directly with the children. There are 5 members of staff who have a level 3 early years qualification. Staff are supported by a curriculum adviser, a cook and a receptionist.

Brook Green Early Years is supported by Sure Start and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thrive in a healthy environment where they have opportunities to enjoy regular exercise and outside play in the open plan setting. They skilfully use a range of tools and play equipment to develop large and small muscle control. For example, children kick and roll oversized balls to each other showing good manipulation and co-ordination. Children benefit from planned outdoor activities and appropriate resources to develop their independence and to challenge them effectively. Younger children also benefit from regular walks around the adjacent park area.

Children learn the importance of hygiene through established routines, such as appropriate hand washing before meal and snack times; using liquid soap and hand dryers to prevent the cross- contamination of germs. Children are aware of their own needs and access the toilets and sinks independently. The environment is clean and well maintained, for instance, younger children benefit from a ' no shoe' policy to ensure they are protected. Children show care and concern for the pet guinea pigs and are aware of hygienic practices when handling them and cleaning them out.

Children benefit from nutritious snacks and meals which are prepared in a hygienic kitchen by an appropriately qualified cook. Children learn the importance of healthy eating through routine activities, such as cafe snack times, and being involved in the preparation of meals, for instance, pizzas. Children's individual needs are addressed, both special dietary needs and the developing needs for the younger children. For example, a vegetarian option is available daily and food preparation meets the needs of babies who are being weaned. Children's independence is encouraged as a water cooler is available for them to access water when they are thirsty.

Well written policies, understood and implemented by staff, ensure children's health is maintained. Sensible exclusion policies are shared with parents to ensure children are protected from illness and infection. Although appropriate parental consent is obtained and medication records are completed appropriately, they are not countersigned by parents to ensure they are aware of the time and dosage administered. Children remain protected in an emergency as most staff have appropriate first aid training which is regularly updated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children move freely around a safe, well maintained environment which is well lit and spacious. The open plan environment for the older children enables them to move freely, without restrictions, encouraging their independence whilst being closely supervised by vigilant staff. Staff are aware of potential risks and are proactive in eliminating hazards through the use of the accident record. However, a written risk assessment has not been completed to identify such hazards and to plan appropriate actions to minimise the risk to children. Children are kept safe from harm as there are robust systems in place to ensure that the premises are secure and that children are collected by appropriate adults.

Staff ensure that the abundant range of toys and resources are regularly checked for safety and cleanliness. Resources are easily accessible to the children to encourage their independence. Equipment, such as buggies and harnesses, are checked daily to ensure children are free from harm. However, there is a shortage of equipment for the younger children. For example, only two cots are available for three one-year-olds who all require an afternoon sleep.

Staff have good knowledge of child protection issues through an informative policy and additional literature which ensures children's welfare is safeguarded. Staff are able to recognise possible signs and symptoms of different forms of child abuse and are aware of the procedure to follow, including the confidential recording of incidents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle quickly within a well organised and comfortable environment which encourages them to achieve in most areas of their development. They thrive in an environment where they are offered an exciting array of activities, where they are well supported by interested adults. An abundant range of toys and resources are easily accessible to encourage children to make choices about their learning. Treasure baskets are used well to develop younger children's use of their senses. For example, treasure baskets are adapted according to the children's interests, such as creating a basket with a range of shoes for the children to take on and off. In the baby unit younger children move freely, choose toys and extend their physical skills. For example, they enjoy role-play activities in a cardboard box where they pretend it is a bed and make it dark.

Staff are using their developing knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to promote and support learning through child initiated play and the use of schemas. Staff focus on the children deploying themselves well to meet their needs through good communication, for instance, responding to their interests using familiar words. Children's learning and development is beginning to be recorded, through some well-written observations to show how the children are progressing.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

On the whole, children benefit from staff's good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum as they develop stimulating activities which evolve from the children's interests. However, not all areas of learning are sufficiently addressed. For example, there is little provision to extend children's knowledge of information; communication technology. Most children achieve well through the staff's effective interaction to support them and extend their learning in their self-chosen activities. However, there is inconsistency in staff's delivery of appropriate teaching methods. For example, at cafe snack time, staff do not consistently involve children in problem solving and early addition and subtraction activities, such as asking how many bowls are needed and have we got enough fruit for everyone. Staff do not consistently ask children to label their creations, ascribe meaning to their marks and involve more able children in hearing and identifying initial sounds.

Informative observations clearly show children's achievements and are used appropriately to develop individual PLOD's; Possible Lines Of Direction, to ensure children are involved in activities that interest and stimulate them. For example, initially children explore the properties of water using bubbles to wash the duplo which is extended, through the good provision of appropriate resources, to creating pathways to move the water from one place to another through the use of a waterfall. Most children communicate their findings well, for instance, a four-year-old child comments that there is a blockage at the bottom of the waterfall which is making the water splash. At present, these observations are not being used effectively to support an appropriate system to monitor children's progression towards the early learning goals.

Some staff engage children in meaningful conversations, to encourage children to talk activities through, and deploy themselves effectively to challenge and extend learning. For example, children are encouraged to mix cornflour, water and colouring together to make gloop and are asked to explain how it feels, what it looks like and what colours they can identify as they mix the food colouring together. Children explore the different textures clapping their hands together to make the cornflour powdery and ' catch ' the dripping mixture. A well thought out list of ideas of how staff could interact with children to help them progress has been established, although, as yet, it has not been fully implemented to ensure consistency.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and happy within the setting. Friendly and enthusiastic staff support the children well as they settle quickly to their self-chosen activities. On the whole, staff have good knowledge of children's needs. For example, staff adhere to parents' wishes discussing younger children's routines through the home link book which keeps parents well informed. However, some children's needs are not being sufficiently met. For example, children with communication difficulties are not being supported through appropriate resourcing and interaction.

Children have a sense of belonging through the regular visits to the local

environment and activities which help them to learn about their lives and the beliefs of others. For example, children are involved in activities which encourage them to observe people who help us in their environment, such as fire fighters. Children have good self-esteem through the relationships established with staff and the consistent praise offered by them.

Predominantly, children behave well as they are clear on expectations. Appropriate behaviour management strategies are being implemented to ensure consistency. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is fostered. Children learn and think about the needs of others, for instance, an older child places the scissors in the centre of the table acknowledging that they could be harmful to a younger child.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are well informed about the setting through a relevant notice board, descriptive displays and informative newsletters. However, parents are not fully involved as there are limited opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's learning. Parents receive termly, written reports to share their children's achievements which relate to the areas of learning. However, they do not clearly identify progression towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from qualified and skilled staff who are appropriately inducted into the day-to-day running of the setting. They enjoy a wide range of play opportunities as staff organise toys, resources and space well. The local environment is used well to further children's experiences. A flexible settling in period encourages children to feel confident and happy within the baby unit. However, the transition period to the main room is inflexible in meeting the needs of more able children who would benefit from a more challenging environment with the older children. Most children benefit from appropriate grouping and close links with their key worker. Therefore, the setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Relevant documentation, such as an informative complaints record, policies and procedures ensure children's care, welfare and learning is promoted well. The operational plan is used appropriately to provide a stable environment. Children are closely supervised and ratios are maintained. However, the register does not consistently show accurate times of attendance for staff and children.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. On the whole, staff and committee work well together supporting each other and sharing ideas. A clear action plan has been established which identifies the improvements the group wish to make which shows their dedication to improving their organisation and learning provision. However, as yet, a robust system to monitor the provision for nursery education has not been fully implemented. For example, although informative observations have been recorded they do not sufficiently show how children are progressing towards the early learning goals or identify the next steps in learning. Staff's professional development is monitored through monthly supervisions and annual appraisals which encourages staff to be involved in the provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see and request. The complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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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):

- conduct a risk assessment of the premises which identifies potential risks and hazards to the children and clearly identifies actions, with timescales, to be taken to minimise identified risks
- ensure organisation of the setting and key worker groupings to maximise children's involvement and meets their individual, developing needs, especially for those children who have English as an additional language
- further develop the daily system to record children's and staff's attendance, showing accurate times of arrival and departure

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):

- develop a robust system to monitor the provision for nursery education to ensure consistency in teaching methods and to ensure activities provide a balance of experiences to sufficiently cover all areas of learning
- develop a recording system that consistently monitors children's progress and

attainment towards the early learning goals to inform next steps in learning

- enhance parental involvement in children's learning through developing a system to gather information from parents on children's attainment at home and on entry

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