



Buttercross Pre school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY309556
Inspection date	21 March 2006
Inspector	Esther Darling
Setting Address	Bingham Robert Miles Infant School, School Lane, Bingham, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, NG13 8FE
Telephone number	01949 837422
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Registered person	Buttercross Pre-School Playgroup
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

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?

Buttercross Pre-school opened approximately 30 years ago. It has recently moved premises to the Robert Miles Infant School situated in the small town of Bingham. The group have access to 1 main play room, toilets and an enclosed outdoor play area. The pre-school serves families from Bingham and some surrounding areas. The group may care for a maximum of 20 children from 2 to under 5 years at any one time, although children are admitted at a minimum age of 2 and a half. There are

currently 52 children on roll and this includes 49 funded 3 and 4-year-olds. The pre-school supports children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. Children attend for a variety of sessions and the pre-school opens 5 days a week, Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15. The pre-school operates a lunch club and this enables some children to attend for the full day.

Of the 8 staff who work on a part-time basis with the children, the person in charge holds an early years qualification to level 3, with 2 staff currently working towards this. The remaining 2 staff members hold the basic qualification. The setting receives support from the Nottinghamshire local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is effectively promoted because staff follow appropriate hygiene routines that minimise the risk of cross infection, such as carefully wiping tables before food is served. Children clearly understand the importance of washing their hands before eating and why doing so keeps them healthy, and do this unprompted after engaging in messy play. Clear arrangements ensure children are well cared for if they are sick or injured as most staff hold relevant first-aid qualifications and follow clear procedures when administering any necessary medication to children.

Children are forming a clear grasp of why certain foods are good for them, and this is promoted via the provision of a variety of healthy choices at most at snack times. This enables them to make the link between diet and their growth and development. They have regular opportunities to develop their independence such as selecting and putting on their own aprons. Children eagerly taste the food offered, discussing their favourite with their friends and adults present.

Children enjoy daily physical exercise both inside the large hall and outside in the safely enclosed play area. There are good opportunities for them to run, ride wheeled toys and develop coordination and control of their bodies. This is done through the use of a good variety of equipment, such as balancing beams, hoops and bean bags. Children's experience of increasing their strength and large muscle development is not fully realised.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment. The playroom is relatively spacious and is decorated with displays relevant to the current themes and showing examples of each child's work. This enables children to celebrate their own creativity. Most activities are attractively set up before the children arrive, and this

means they quickly settle to play. The furniture in the room is thoughtfully planned to allow quieter areas where children can sit and read or engage in tabletop activities. This arrangement better meets the needs of the older children, but is not yet fully developed for two to three-year-olds. Children have the use of a wide range of resources, many of which they are able to access independently, and therefore benefit from initiating their own ideas.

Children stay safe because staff supervise them vigilantly, enhancing the sound security system collection procedures that are effectively maintained. Risk assessments, policies and procedures are followed by the staff to create a safe environment for children at all times. Children begin to develop an understanding of keeping themselves safe because staff members give clear explanations such as clearing up sand so that others do not slip on it. Their awareness is raised through topic work and visitors for example local ambulance staff when further important safety messages are learned. Children's welfare is safeguarded as the staff are clearly aware of their responsibilities towards protecting children from possible abuse or neglect. All staff members have attended recent training on this subject, and a comprehensive written policy is understood and shared by all.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and enjoy their time at the pre-school. They are confident and keen to access the range of play activities provided, and these are planned around a theme offering opportunities for children to extend all areas of their development. Children eagerly plunge their hands into bowls of rice and flour and are totally absorbed as they explore what they can do with it. The new children receive good levels of adult support, which enables them to quickly settle. Children develop trusting relationships with staff, often involving them in their play and seeking them out for comfort. They benefit from joining in small group activities and enjoy coming together for listening to an impromptu story or morning registration. The pre-school has a minority of children who are under three years of age. Although the quality of activities ensures that they are appropriate for their abilities, the 'Birth to three matters' framework is not yet incorporated into the planning or used to effectively assess this age group's progress.

Nursery Education

the quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum and understand how children learn through play, thus fostering their enjoyment and interest. All areas of learning are covered on a regular basis, with time provided for children to consolidate their skills. Staff clearly understand what children are expected to learn from the activities and are also open and alert to the spontaneous opportunities for learning that occur. For example, when children play with the dough that they helped to make and comment on what they are doing, staff use skilled methods such as incorporating a number rhyme to ensure children are able to extend their own mathematical learning in a fun way. Staff use

their observations of children to record their achievements on a regular basis and use this information to accurately record their progress along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. This information is then used informally to plan for each child's next steps in learning so that the majority continue to make good progress. A minority of activities lack the necessary stimulation and challenge to enable older or more able children to progress to their full potential. Staff spend their time working closely with the children, promoting their self-esteem through the use of praise and encouragement. There are clear systems in place to effectively support children with special educational needs. Staff generally make good use of the resources available to them, organising the playroom, hall and equipment in order to offer children valuable experiences throughout the session. The outdoor area is maximised to enable the children to have fun whilst continuing their learning. The staff use a calm and consistent approach to managing children, having high expectations and addressing any undesirable behaviour in a manner that supports children's welfare and development. This helps them to understand what is expected of them and to behave appropriately.

Children are motivated and positive attitudes towards learning. They eagerly participate in activities and concentrate well to complete their chosen tasks. They greet their peers and relate to staff and visitors, showing a growing confidence and self-esteem. Children display good levels of behaviour throughout the session as show burgeoning levels of care and concern for others. At registration, children of varying ages sit and listen attentively to staff, who skilfully sustain their attention enabling them to take turns to express themselves. For example whilst showing and commenting on a favourite object from home. Their independence skills are well-developed as they care for themselves by wiping their own noses and expressing any particular needs they may have. Children's language is developing well and many are most confident to share their news during group activities. They enjoy handling a wide range of books and are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. Children have access to a range of mark making resources and show enthusiasm when beginning to write their names on their pictures or within their play. They begin to link sounds to letters in a sound of the week group activity and daily singing sessions consolidate this learning by exploring rhymes. Children eagerly count up to 20 and recognise numerals of personal significance, for example through pointing to the number three on the weather chart and commenting that that is their number.

The children are beginning to explore and find out about the world in which they live. They discover objects such as magnets, investigate their properties and how they react with other materials. Children notice some of the features of living things by playing with toys which represent them such as dinosaurs and snakes in the sand tray. However they rarely participate in first-hand experiences of objects or living things in relation to topics such as growing. Their awareness of the local community is raised through outings, such as to the library and fire station. Children learn about their own and other cultures through meaningful topic work where they relish in practical activities such as tasting Indian foods. Their physical skills are enhanced with the use of both large and small equipment, and individual achievements such as balancing on the beams and throwing a bean bag into a hoop are celebrated by all. Children begin to learn appropriate skills, such as how to hold a thin paintbrush and

are given plenty of opportunities to practice and express themselves through free painting at the easel. They explore what happens when they mix colours creating a marbled effect whilst making the dough themselves with adult support. Children choose from a range of musical instruments and play with them outside, being free to form their own rhythms.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have positive and worthwhile experiences at the pre-school within the calm atmosphere, where they are able to be reflective if they wish. The staff respect the children and because they are good role models the children in turn are learning to respect one another. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children actively care for the immediate environment by taking away equipment when the signal of the bells ringing is given. Their confidence and self-esteem flourishes because of the staff's continued use of praise and encouragement. Their lives are enriched as they are enabled to value their own and other cultures through the use of a sound range of appropriate resources that positively reflect a proportion of the wider society. Children with identified special needs make good progress because the staff work cooperatively with parents and external agencies to ensure that their specific needs are met through inclusion and valuing individuality.

Children are well behaved. They show a growing understanding of the group's code of conduct, and are learning to negotiate and therefore share equipment, and take turns at activities. Staff readily praise children to affirm their good behaviour and this builds on their sense of personal responsibility and self-worth.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Ongoing sharing of information ensures children's needs are met and parents are welcomed warmly into the group, having a variety of ways in which they can take an active role. For example, parents have the opportunity to be part of the elected management committee and help during sessions, and therefore informally extend their children's learning at home. Commendable written information about the educational curriculum and the policies and procedures that guide the group is given to each parent in the form of a prospectus. Current planning is displayed and this ensures parents are always aware of the topics their children are following. They have good access to their children's assessment records and parents' knowledge of their children's development is maximised when they start at the pre-school. The impact of this is that staff have proficient information on children's starting point in order to effectively plot their progress from the very beginning. Parents report that they are very pleased with the education and care that their children receive.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children receive good levels of support and supervision to help them feel secure.

Staff are most clear about their designated responsibilities and work very well together to meet the needs of the children. Sound overall recruitment procedures are in place to guide the appointment of new staff. Children's care, welfare and development is promoted because the majority of records and procedures which are required for the safe and efficient management of the provision are maintained accurately. Written policies are thorough and are regularly reviewed and updated.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. The staff receive good support from the voluntary management committee, with whom they meet on a regular basis to ensure the smooth running of the group in line with the identified aims. The staff constantly strive for improvement which is evident through their commitment to updating their skills and knowledge via regular short training courses. Two staff members are currently studying to gain a higher level of qualification. Children benefit from having a qualified, consistent and experienced staff team who share the commitment and enthusiasm of the supervisor. Overall the pre-school meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection it was recommended that the pre-school improve the system for recording attendance, to include times of arrival and departure for both staff and children. An accurate and clear system has now been developed, therefore improving the welfare of children and giving further reassurance to parents.

At the last nursery education inspection the pre-school was asked to extend the provision and availability of resources to support and extend children's independence and, further increase the opportunities to initiate their own learning and to develop and create their own ideas; develop the use of practical activities and daily routines to further promote children's knowledge and understanding of addition and subtraction; provide a wide range of opportunities through purposeful, independent activities for children to recognise and write their own names.

Children now independently select from the clearly labelled and accessibly stored resources, enabling them to initiate their own ideas regarding imaginative and constructive play. Although sound, this system is not yet fully effective regarding children choosing designing, making and writing materials. Through staff training some good and practical ideas, such as the mathematical interest area, have been used to ensure that children's knowledge and understanding of addition and subtraction is promoted further. Children now recognise their own names and some are beginning to write them. This has been done via the use of name cards which are used in practical ways that children can relate to.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004.

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):

- make better use of time throughout the session in order to ensure that children are always productively engaged, and periods of waiting are kept to a minimum

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 all activities are more fully resourced in order to stimulate all children and further encourage sustained concentration to promote their learning
- ensure that children have more first-hand experiences of related objects or living things with regard to topics planned to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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