



Blue Coat Pre-School Unit & Busy Bees

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	510073
Inspection date	16 May 2006
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Blue Coat C of E Primary School, Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 7BD
Telephone number	01453 525022
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Registered person	Blue Coat Pre-School Unit & Busy Bees
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School 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?

Bluecoat Pre-School Unit first opened in 1969 and moved to the present site in 2000. Busy Bees Before and After-School Club opened in 1993. The setting operates from premises within the Blue Coat Church of England Primary School in Wotton-under-Edge in Gloucestershire. A voluntary committee manages the groups that are overseen by a unit co-ordinator who has particular responsibility for the organisation, structure and day-to-day management. The groups have sole use of

the unit area designated to them within the school, which comprises of two adjoining play rooms, a connecting entrance and integral toilet facilities. The small kitchen and recently added office are for the adults' use only. There is an adjacent, enclosed, side garden available and children also use the infant and junior school playgrounds and adjoining playing field. Children have occasional access to the school hall. A maximum of 36 children from 2 years to under 5 years may attend the pre-school unit and 32 children from the school aged from 4 years to under 8 years may attend the out-of-school club at any time.

The pre-school unit is open Monday to Friday during term-time only. Buttons, the group for children aged from 2 years 9 months to 4 years, operates each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45. The Toggles sessions, for children who are almost 4 years and older, operate each weekday from 09.00 to 11.30; Buttons and Toggles groups open from 12.30 to 15.00 depending on the demand. The group also operates a Poppers session, for toddlers accompanied by a parent or carer, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 13.00 to 15.00.

There are currently 99 children from 2 years to under 5 years on roll; of these, 62 children receive funding for nursery education and most come from the local area. At present, the pre-school supports a number of funded children with special educational needs and some who speak English as an additional language.

Busy Bees is open on weekdays before school from 08.00 to 08.50 and after school from 15.15 to 18.00. It is open on in-service days from 08.00 to 18.00. There are 67 children on roll who all attend Blue Coat Church of England Primary School.

There are two teams of staff and 17 members of staff working directly with the children. Of these, 13 hold appropriate early years or playwork qualifications, including the unit co-ordinator and leaders of each group. There are four staff working towards a qualification.

The unit coordinator, as head of the pre-school unit and out-of-school club, has a close working relationship with the school. She liaises with the school Foundation Stage coordinator regarding the curriculum. She contacts the school special educational needs coordinator regarding the children with special needs and the head of the school for all other matters.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm clean premises where they learn the importance of good personal care from an early age. Procedures such as daily cleaning sustain high levels of hygiene and help prevent the spread of infection. Children who become ill are well cared for. The risk of catching infectious illnesses are reduced as parents know the importance of keeping sick children at home. Children receive good continuity of care through the sharing of information with parents about any accidents

and medication given.

The children learn the importance of regular drinks as parents are requested to provide water bottles. Pre-school children choose milk or water at snack time and are encouraged to pour their own drinks. The groups take good account of parents' wishes and children's choices to provide balanced snacks that appeal to children and meet their dietary needs. Those who attend before school are always offered a good variety of nourishing breakfast foods. Children regularly taste different fruits and enjoy preparing and tasting different foods linked with the season and cultural festivals.

Children enjoy going outside in the fresh air and often choose to play outdoors. They develop a positive attitude to physical exercise as they join in free play and organised activities. Before and after school, if the weather is unsuitable for vigorous outside games of running and football, children enjoy using the spacious hall. Pre-school children are challenged by physical play each session. They use small equipment and wheeled toys on the playground, visiting a nearby play park or exploring the woods behind the school.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move freely and safely within the child-orientated environment. Possible risks are identified and minimised in daily checks and detailed assessment of risks. They are safe as staff are vigilant and supervise them constantly. While children play outside, before and after school, staff are well aware of families moving around and of visitors to the grounds. Children arrive and depart safely; detailed booking systems are in place and the premises link directly with the school. The children only leave with authorised persons.

The children use high quality equipment that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. They choose activities from a wide range of available toys and equipment that effectively meet safety standards. The pre-school children increasingly self select resources from safe and accessible storage. Children learn to keep themselves safe, staff remind them about possible hazards and they are shown how to be careful; for example, as they run down a slope.

The staff's sound understanding of child protection and the local procedures contribute to safeguarding the children's welfare. Most members of staff hold current first aid certificates and are trained in child protection. This knowledge is effectively underpinned by comprehensive policies and procedures, to support staff to take appropriate action in the event of any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the groups. Their care needs are well met, in considered

routines that include outdoor activities and opportunities for energetic and quieter play. The staff closely monitor the children's progress and achievements, so the carefully planned activities take their individual needs into account. At the out-of-school club, children are keen to arrive and become so absorbed that they are sometimes reluctant to go home. They follow a flexible routine and enjoy a varied programme of activities, based on interesting topics devised and evaluated by staff. Children have a wide choice of play and choose whether to be indoors or outdoors. They are confident to organise their own games and show huge excitement; for example, as a 'volcano' experiment begins to work. Staff immediately address any requests for further activities such as painting. The children are well supported by caring adults, including willing junior staff, who are available all the time and join in the play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the pre-school unit children make very good progress towards the early learning goals, in all six areas of learning. In mathematical development children say numbers regularly, in their conversation and in play. They count confidently and young children are very well supported to compare numbers of objects, including toy elephants. They accurately use mathematical language about shape, measure and pattern such as stripes. Children make good, sometimes very good, progress in relation to their starting points. Each child's creativity is highly valued as they explore textures and colours; for example, when mixing paints or black and white dough. Their use of imagination is highly fostered, in skilfully supported role play and with small-world toys and construction sets. Children willingly respond through all their senses; for example, as they look closely at flowers and represent them in drawings. They freely respond to rhythm and music and enthusiastically join in a wide range of favourite songs.

There are no differences in learning between different groups of children, such as girls and boys. In communication, language and literacy all children develop their listening skills and use new words, such as 'gourd'. They engage in regular conversations, with adults and other children, during relaxed activities and snack times to negotiate over toys and share their ideas. A number of children immediately choose and become absorbed in books after tidy time and some are encouraged to name their work. All children learn that print and written words have meaning, as they enjoy the daily whole-group story and use writing for their own purposes; for example, to note a 'food order' in the 'café'. Children eagerly grapple with new ideas and skills to gain very good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They investigate a wide range of objects and living things; for example, as they hunt for natural materials and wildlife, in the woods behind the setting. Children explore their own and unfamiliar cultures in meaningful ways; for example, through crafts and food.

Staff have a very good knowledge of how children learn and develop. They closely monitor the children's responses and achievements, so activities are well planned to support their progress. The children are happy, interested and involved. They effectively make decisions about their chosen tasks so they concentrate and persevere. The children's interaction with the skilful and enthusiastic staff is very good. The adults begin with the children's interests so they willingly respond and are

confident to ask for help; for example, to read food packet labels. The staff's methods and expectations usually challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can. For example, children handle objects in circle time so their learning is effective and they attend closely to the discussion. The staff continually scan over the activities and are skilled at approaching children when they need support to help them to continue their high quality play.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children settle well into the groups. The staff work closely with the families so children are cared for as individuals. Staff know each child well and observe them closely to support their moods and needs. The children frequently interact with the calm, friendly staff and play well together. Children willingly share resources such as balls and sponge bricks and take turns to do a simple science experiment with an adult. The staff ensure that the resources positively represent children who attend as well as individuals from the wider community. This helps children develop a positive attitude to others.

The staff take effective action to identify children's special needs. They take all the necessary steps to promote their welfare and development in close liaison with their parents and other agencies. Their progress is well supported by staff's clear understanding of their individual play plans and skill in communicating using familiar signs and pictures. All children receive good support to behave well. The out-of-school club staff promote positive rules that are prominently posted and discussed with the children. Pre-school children respond well to the staff's clear expectations and frequently sing songs to remind themselves of good manners. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. The children receive consistent support as all required permissions are obtained, parent's wishes are well heeded and personal details are kept confidential. Families respond positively to the welcoming environment, with displays of children's work and general information about the groups. The pre-school children benefit as families are well informed about the Foundation Stage curriculum and keyworkers regularly talk with them, about the children's progress. However, parents are not able to add to the children's records as these are only shared when the child leaves the pre-school. Parents have meaningful opportunities to be involved in the children's learning as they volunteer as management trustees and as pre-school helpers. Families are well informed about the current topics to be able to extend the children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. The groups are effectively organised with very good use made of space and most resources, including some prepared by staff. There are ample adults in the

out-of-school clubs to welcome and play with the children. The pre-school children receive sound support through the well-established system of keyworkers. The friendly, approachable staff regularly liaise with parents to informally share the children's achievement and progress.

The setting uses robust procedures for employing and vetting staff and there are good systems to ensure their continuing suitability. The detailed policies are effectively used to support the children's welfare. The well-organised documentation is accessible and includes a log to record any complaints, that is compliant with Ofsted's requirements. Sound booking systems are in place; registers include the names of all children, staff and visitors, although some do not clearly show the hours of attendance.

Leadership and management are good. Key staff and the managers provide very good support; so there is a strong focus on the personal development and achievements of all children. The staff's professional development is actively encouraged. There is close monitoring of the effectiveness of the setting, to give clear direction to improve the organisation and outcomes for children. The children's care and nursery education are effectively integrated; for example, as expanding outdoor facilities encourage them to develop and learn. The enthusiastic staff are skilfully motivated and form effective teams. They are highly committed to promoting an inclusive environment for all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended the setting to improve fire practice procedures. Fire drills are now undertaken on a regular basis with the school. These include all children, and staff record them appropriately. This practice supports the children to learn how to keep themselves safe in an emergency.

The previous education inspection recommended that consideration should be given to improving information for parents, about the children's learning in the Foundation Stage. Families are now given clear verbal and written explanations of the curriculum. The learning intentions for each group of children are displayed and weekly notices are posted to inform parents of how the activities are planned. As a result, parents are increasingly able to support their children's learning.

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 the parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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):

- extend the systems for registering children and pre-school staff and visitors on a sessional basis so these clearly show the hours of attendance.

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):

- encourage all older children regularly to use books for enjoyment as individuals or in small groups and to write their own names on their work
- provide regular opportunities for parents to contribute towards and to share the records of their children's learning throughout their time in the pre-school.

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