



Bobtails Full Day Care

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY235041
Inspection date	20 April 2005
Inspector	Ruth Thrasher
Setting Address	Bernice Terrace, Lipson, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 7HW
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Registered person	Bobtails Full Day Care
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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?

Bobtails Full Day Care re-opened on its present site in 2002.

The group has sole use of a purpose-built, prefabricated building in the grounds of Lipson Vale Primary School, in a residential area of Plymouth. There is one large room that can be subdivided, a smaller room and associated facilities, as well as an outdoor play area.

The group is open from 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours for 50 weeks a year. It offers two pre-school sessions a day with a lunch club, full day care for children aged two, and a before and after school service. There is also a holiday club out of term time. There are currently 130 children on roll, including 34 funded 3-year-olds and 21 funded 4-year-olds. There are 19 children with special educational needs and 2 children for whom English is an additional language.

There are nine staff working directly with the children, working a combination of part and full time hours. Five staff are qualified to level 3, including the two joint lead practitioners; two staff are qualified to level 2, one of whom is working towards level 3; and there are two NVQ trainees. The setting also employs a manager who has an NVQ 4, and a deputy, who are both supernumerary.

A voluntary committee provides overall management of the group, which is now a registered charity. The setting is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Staff are currently working towards a quality assurance scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities that contribute to their good health. They have regular outdoor play throughout the day and lots of fresh air, taking part in activities to develop their physical skills, such as balancing on stilts, crawling through tunnels and riding bikes. They make good use of the outside play area. Children are aware of the need to keep warm when they go outside by putting on their coats. The younger children join in the activities enthusiastically because staff make good use of the Birth to Three Matters framework.

The children are cared for in a warm and clean environment. They are learning the importance of good hygiene routines, can go to the toilet independently and are reminded by staff to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Their health needs are well met as staff are diligent in recording accidents and ensuring that all necessary documentation is in place, including a clear policy about children who are sick or infectious.

Children are beginning to understand the importance of a healthy diet. Regular nutritious snacks are served in substantial quantities. These include fresh fruit, toast and crumpets and a choice of milk or water to drink. The excellent cafeteria system enables children to eat when they are hungry and make choices about what they want to eat or drink. Children have the option of bringing in a packed lunch or having a hot dinner brought in from the adjacent primary school. They are discouraged from bringing in sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks. The children's dietary needs are well met and catered for as all the staff are well aware of any allergies or special requirements.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in purpose built premises that are spacious and well maintained and can be used flexibly for different activities or to provide a quieter area for younger or less confident children. They have access to a good range of appropriate equipment that is in good condition and safety is maintained by regular checks and risk assessments. Resources are well organised and children can safely access these for themselves and they also help tidy them away. Children's safety is promoted by staff who are all aware of their responsibilities to report any hazards, carry out regular fire drills and ensure the first aid kits are kept well stocked. Precautions are in place to prevent any accidents, for example a gate is in place to prevent access to the kitchen, and most staff have up to date first aid qualifications.

Children are protected because staff have a clear understanding of what they would do if they had concerns about a child and are clear about child protection procedures. Children are kept safe when they arrive and depart or when they are collected from school as there are sound procedures in place and staff are well deployed at these times.

The setting ensures that Ofsted is notified of any staff changes, however procedures for ensuring that unchecked staff are not left unsupervised are not sufficiently robust. A risk assessment has identified the need for the back gate to rear of the premises to be kept locked but the bolt is at child height, and the risk assessment of the outdoor area has not been effective in identifying other potential hazards for children, such as nettles and rainwater that has collected in a sand tray.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at Bobtails. They are cheerful and confident, participating enthusiastically in activities such as music time. They are making good progress because staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and the Birth to Three Matters framework. They receive good support when they are new to the setting and the key worker system ensures that each child's needs are met effectively.

The planning of activities takes account of the age and ability of each child. For example, there are well planned activities for children attending before and after school and during the holidays. They explore different themes and take part in a variety of role-play and creative activities. The children in the pre-school and the two-year-olds are organised in smaller groups for circle time, story time and music. This ensures that children feel secure and confident in the setting. The youngest children benefit from a programme based on the Birth to Three Matters framework, which follows the same themes covered in pre-school but is adapted to reflect the framework, and includes activities such as making simple collages and cooking.

Children develop good relationships with the staff who are attentive to their needs

and extend their learning by engaging them in conversation and using their questioning skills. This ensures that their individual needs are met and their welfare promoted.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children happily participate in the good range of well-planned activities on offer. They take responsibility as they join in routine tasks such as tidying up, or changing their shoes and putting on their coats to play outside. They are able to access for themselves an extensive range of well chosen resources that support their learning across all areas of learning. They develop their concentration in activities such as cutting up card and pasting, or making play dough into 'biscuits' or 'pies'. They understand the basic rules of the group and discuss these at circle time, expressing their own ideas about what is right and wrong. Children wait patiently for their turn at snack time, finding their name on the board and waiting for a space.

Children are making consistently good progress in all of the areas of learning. They are learning to be independent as they take themselves to the toilet and spread their own toast at snack time. They make excellent use of books throughout the session, accessing them independently as well as listening to stories. Small groups for children with speech and language difficulties help them make good progress. Children count confidently and learn about the correspondence between objects and numbers through meaningful activities with a number line at circle time. They use their imagination in the home corner, pretending to make meals and do the dishes, with both boys and girls taking part in these activities. Visitors to the group, such as staff from a local wild life centre who bring in animals, extend children's understanding of the wider community. Children have access to a variety of activities to stretch their imagination and dressing up clothes, water play and paints are timetabled on a regular basis but are not routinely available at every session.

Children are well supported in their learning by the good organisation of time and resources and the effective deployment of staff who encourage and guide the children. Children are clear about expectations for behaviour as a result of the clear boundaries set by staff and the emphasis on promoting positive behaviour. A 'Kindness Tree' rewards children with an 'apple' when they have shown kindness or consideration to somebody else, promoting their self-esteem.

Each member of staff takes it in turn to plan a week of activities, which ensures that they understand the learning objectives of the activities and how they link to the stepping stones through which children progress towards the early learning goals. Good use of assessment means that staff know what children need to do next in order to move on, and key worker plans identify activities for the key worker groups in order to develop individual children's skills. This ensures that children make good progress in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued in the setting and children are helped to play a full part in the group whatever their individual needs or abilities. Children behave well and staff effectively intervene to encourage children to resolve their disputes and apologise where appropriate. They use lots of praise and encouragement to promote positive behaviour. They encourage children to share and take turns, for example when playing their instruments at music time.

Children with special needs receive excellent support in the setting, and staff work very well with outside agencies to provide additional support, including one-to-one sessions where needed. Small groups concentrating on speech and language development help children feel confident and make good progress in this area. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator has a very good understanding of her role and staff work well together to ensure that any additional needs are identified at an early stage so that appropriate support can be given. Children with English as an additional language are also well supported and staff are learning basic phrases in the children's home language, such as Bengali, to make them feel valued.

Children have access to a range of books, resources and activities that promote their understanding of diversity and equal opportunities are promoted well by the setting's ethos: 'Everybody equal, everybody different'. Children have equal access to activities whatever their gender, ethnicity, religion or ability and activities are differentiated to ensure that all children receive appropriate challenge. The planning for the two-year-olds also takes account the fact that children will have different starting points and activities are adapted to ensure their needs are met. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

There is a good partnership with parents who meet with their child's key worker to review progress. Parents are involved in their children's learning through activities that are sent home in the children's 'home bags'. They find out about what the children are learning through displays of plans and ideas for activities linked to the themes that they can do at home. This involvement is effective in helping children make good progress in their learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by the good quality leadership and management and effective organisation of the day care.

The premises are well organised. They are purpose built and designed to be used flexibly to cater for different groups and types of activities. For example, the main play room can be subdivided to form two smaller rooms and the dining room is used for the younger children or for small groups for speech and language.

There are good staffing levels and staff are deployed effectively to ensure good support for the children. All staff either have or are working towards a relevant childcare qualification and training is positively encouraged. For example all staff

have been trained in the Birth to Three Matters framework. This emphasis on training ensures good support for children's development and learning whatever their age. There is an effective induction programme for new staff and trainees, who are clear about health and safety, child protection and other policies which impact on the care of the children.

The group is supported by an enthusiastic manager and deputy who are backed by a committee that is very much involved in the running of the group. The leadership and management are effective in monitoring the provision, including provision for nursery education, and are aware of things they would like to see improve. The setting has recently started a quality assurance scheme to help them improve the provision even further. They review the policies and procedures of the group to ensure they meet the needs of the children attending, for example they are about to review the special educational needs policy. The good quality of the provision ensures that it meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care and education inspections recommended that the group ensures that the role of Ofsted is clear in the complaints and child protection policies; enhance the use, by adults, of incidental opportunities to further extend children's learning and increase children's involvement in planning.

The policies for complaints and child protection are now clearer about the role of Ofsted, leading to enhanced protection for children. Staff ensure they maximize any incidental learning opportunities, for example studying a spider that a child found in a drain in the outside play area. Children have opportunities throughout the session to choose what they want to do and they also have a free week once a term when they plan what they want to do themselves.

The result of these changes has been a further improvement in children's care, learning and development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 Ofsted has received one complaint relating to Standard 1: Suitable Person, Standard 6: Safety and Standard 12: Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers. Concerns were raised in relation to two children being booked into the session by the provider and the provider giving permission for another parent to take the children home.

The provider was asked to investigate the concerns and report back within 10 working days. The provider reported back and provided details of their investigation, including copies of correspondence. Ofsted assessed this information in relation to the National Standards to which the concerns related.

From the details provided, Ofsted are satisfied that the National Standards are being maintained and the provider continues to be suitable for 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):

- make sure that risk assessments of the outdoor play area are effective in keeping children safe.
- ensure that systems for ensuring staff complete appropriate checks are robust and that staff who have not had their checks completed are not left unsupervised with the children.

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 children have more regular access to water play, painting and dressing up clothes to further promote their mathematical and creative development.

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