



The Blue Coat School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY309405
Inspection date 10 July 2006
Inspector Valerie Fane

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Registered person The Blue Coat School (528805)
Type of inspection Childcare
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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Blue Coat School is an independent Church of England Preparatory School and provides education for girls and boys. The Pre-Preparatory Department was established in 1965. The Pre-School and the Out of school service were registered in 2005. The school is situated in its own extensive grounds in the Edgbaston area, close to the centre of Birmingham. At seven years of age the majority of children transfer to the Preparatory Department on the same site.

The Pre-Preparatory Department is open each weekday during school term times. The school day is from 08:30 to 15:15, but the school is open from 08:00 until 18:00

each day. The school operates a before and after school club and a holiday club. Children in Buttons Pre-school attend on a sessional basis, children in nursery may attend part time during the first two terms and children in transition forms attend full time. Funded children are accommodated in Buttons Pre-School group, three parallel nursery classes and three parallel transition classes.

There are currently 286 children from two to seven years on roll. Of these 96 children receive funding for nursery education. Children who attend come from mixed cultural backgrounds and from a wide catchment area. The school currently supports a number of children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The school employs 17 staff who work with the children in the Foundation Stage, together with a number of specialist teachers. Of these 15 staff hold relevant teaching or early years qualifications. The school receives support from a mentor teacher from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about the importance of good hygiene routines as they learn to wash their hands with increasing independence after using the toilet and before eating. Staff check that the older two-year-olds have washed their hands properly. Children receive generally good care in the event of an accident or needing medication because all staff have current first aid knowledge. They keep records of any accident that occurs but they occasionally do not record the child's full name and do not consistently ensure that the records are signed by parents. This potentially compromises children's well-being. Children are protected from cross infection because the school has a clear policy not to accept children who are unwell and this is made known to parents before their child attends.

Children have good opportunities to develop healthy eating habits at lunchtime as they enjoy an interesting range of meals from menus that take into account children's preferences as well as providing food of high nutritional quality. They have healthy snacks of either fresh or dried fruit between meals. Children attending the Out of school club have a healthy tea with a variety of sandwiches made with a choice of brown or white bread followed by fresh fruit. Children who require special diets receive good care because they have meals that fully comply with their dietary needs and are served separately when appropriate. Children's well-being is safeguarded because staff have relevant food hygiene qualifications.

Children understand the benefits of fresh air and exercise because they play outside every day in most weather conditions. The youngest children have a playtime both morning and afternoon in the enclosed playground where they use a variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment. They develop their climbing skills on the large slide, with support from staff when needed. They improve their balance and co-ordination on a range of bikes and other wheeled toys or on the fixed equipment

such as the train. Children attending the out of school club play outside each day whenever possible. They enjoy a game of football or use the slides, platforms and climbing bars on the 'climber'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where all risks have been identified and minimised. The school has carried out general risk assessments and staff in the pre-school have carried out a specific risk assessment for walks in the school grounds. Children learn to keep themselves safe when they are out on walks because staff remind them of the rules before they go out such as not to touch plants without asking and to stay near the staff at all times. The pre-school has clearly defined collection procedures that ensure children are only collected by named adults, a password system is used if parents need someone else to collect their child in an emergency. Children in the Out of school club are also safe because parents are required to notify the school if someone different is collecting their child and this is recorded in the club diary.

Children use a wide range of very good equipment that is suitable and safe. This is because the staff provide child-sized furniture, equipment and toys that are appropriate for their purpose, are of suitable design and condition and are very well maintained. Children in the Out of school club use an interesting and varied range of equipment that is stored in either the classroom or the room in the sports hall and is kept exclusively for their use.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because the staff have a secure understanding of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care. Children in the pre-school learn to protect themselves because they listen to stories about topics such as what to do if they get lost and things that should not be kept secret. Staff use the book as a starting point for appropriate discussions.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are very happy and settled in the pre-school group. They are developing good relationships and talk confidently to each other, to staff and to visitors. They benefit from a wide range of free play and planned activities linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the expertise of staff who are well-qualified and experienced. Staff have recently attended training that has enabled them to develop a secure understanding of child-centred learning.

Children take part in creative activities. They paint freely on the easel or sponge paint at the table. They play with the water with different toys such as underwater creatures. They widen their vocabulary as they learn to name animals such as lobsters and crabs. They improve their hand control as they fill the fish with water and

squeeze them. Children develop a love of books. They look at books on their own after snack time. They enjoy listening to group stories and they improve their listening and communication skills as they confidently answer questions about the story. They join in enthusiastically with the words and action of favourite songs such as 'From the top of my head to the tip of my toes'.

Older children enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the Out of school club. They develop good relationships with the staff. They choose whether to attend a wide variety of clubs, such as ballet, gym or tennis, or to stay in the out of school rooms. There they enjoy activities such as junk modelling, or bubble painting or play with the toys available; construction toys, role play, books, a train set and many others. The oldest children use a separate classroom where they play table football, use age-appropriate games on the computer or play table-top games together.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop a good awareness of our wider society because the school provides a range of toys such as puppets, dolls and bilingual books to support their learning. They learn about different cultures and religions as they celebrate a variety of different festivals such as Chinese New Year where they taste Chinese food, dance to tapes of Chinese music and find out about each child's animal year. Staff develop the children's interests well and extend their learning to find out about other countries represented in the pre-school.

Children behave extremely well. They react very positively to the excellent role models provided by staff and their calm manner and clear expectations for their behaviour. When younger children occasionally exhibit challenging behaviour they receive clear and consistent requests from staff that are quietly and patiently repeated until the child responds and is rewarded with lots of praise.

Children benefit from the good relationships that the staff have with their parents. Parents receive an informative brochure about the school before their child attends. They learn about the elements of the 'Birth to three matters' framework through posters in the entrance area. They receive ongoing information about their child's care through regular conversations with their child's key worker and they have access to their written development records. Parents are made aware of how to make a complaint to Ofsted but the school does not maintain a complaints log that conforms to the regulatory requirements.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good care because the school liaises closely with their parents and, if appropriate, with outside agencies. They obtain extra funding if it is available and use information supplied by the speech therapist to support children's speech and language development. Staff meet the needs of individual children well by allowing them flexibility during the school day to play freely with toys while other children are taking part in structured or group activities.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children flourish in the well-organised school environment. Children are protected from harm because the recruitment procedures are thorough. This ensures that all staff have been vetted and are suitable to be in contact with children. The head teacher is also aware of the need to inform Ofsted of any changes to the premises or to senior staff.

Children's welfare is generally safeguarded because all required policies and procedures are in place. However, the procedures to be followed in the event of a child not being collected from the school lack detail. This potentially compromises children's safety. Staff keep accurate records of children's attendance. This is particularly thorough in the Out of school club where children's attendance and different sports clubs is carefully recorded so that staff are always aware of exactly which children are in their care at a given time. Children's care is enhanced because staff attend regular training to update and improve their practice.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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

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.

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):

- improve the recording of accidents to ensure that the child's full name is always recorded and that parents consistently sign the record
- improve the procedures to be followed in the event of a child not being collected from the school
- maintain a log that conforms to Ofsted's regulations of any complaints made against the pre-school or Out of school care.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk