

Brookside Community Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	208175
Inspection date	08 December 2006
Inspector	Olwen Pulker
Setting Address	Brookside Community Centre, Bembridge, Brookside, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 1NE
Telephone number	07799 730851(M)
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Registered person	Brookside Community Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 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?

Brookside Community Pre-School opened in 1998. It operates from two rented rooms within Brookside Community Centre. The setting is located in Brookside, which is a suburb of Telford, and it serves the local area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:15 to 11:45 during term time only. Pre-school is followed by a lunch club which operates until 13:00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are currently 21 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these seven children receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The setting employs three staff who hold appropriate early years qualifications. In addition to paid staff, a parent rota is employed and volunteers are also welcomed into the group. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning good personal hygiene as they wash their hands in the course of their daily routines. Liquid soap is provided and children use paper towels to dry their hands which is effective in reducing the risk of infection. Older children help others gain an understanding of personal hygiene as they remind others to cover their mouths when coughing. The effective implementation of the setting's policies and procedures, such as excluding children who are ill or infectious, also protect children from the risk of infection and cross-contamination. Most staff hold current first aid certificates and there is written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment in place for all children. This consent is available on site so staff have ease of access to it if required.

Children benefit from healthy snacks and enjoy choosing from different fruits on a daily basis, for example apple and raisins. They begin to learn about eating healthily as staff sit with them and talk about the benefits of a healthy diet, for example telling the children that milk is good for their teeth. Children have the choice of water or milk during snack times.

Children have regular opportunities for physical play outdoors in all weathers. They enjoy being outside in the covered play area where they develop their co-ordination riding on the wheeled toys, climbing and sliding and crawling through the play tunnel. Children also make good use of the hall for musical movement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have reasonable access to a wide range of play resources which are in good condition and regularly checked for safety. Some toys and resources are stored within low-level storage units in the small room where children can independently access items of their choice. In the hall, children access play equipment from the range that has been made available to them by staff. There is limited use of displays at child-height due to the building being a shared facility but staff make good use of the space available in the small room to display colourful examples of children's work along with letter and number prompts.

Security and surveillance of children's arrival and departure is effective and children regularly practise the emergency evacuation procedure. Risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor area are carried out daily and a high level of supervision ensure children are kept safe. Sensitive and timely reminders from staff help children learn to keep themselves and others safe.

The setting complies with procedures and documentation required to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded. Information relating to child protection procedures is readily available and staff have accessed training. Children are well protected by staff who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and know what to do if there is a concern about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup. They arrive and settle quickly and easily, confidently choosing what they want they would like to do from the activities set out. The children play

on their own or in small groups; they have time to enjoy their favourite activities, in particular physical play, role play, dressing-up and creative activities such as threading, painting, gluing and collage. However, some staff restrict children's creativity and self-expression by instructing them where to place pom-poms and glitter on their pictures. Also children have little opportunity to develop independence and competency in the use of tools such as scissors as staff provide them with strips of sticky tape instead of supporting them to cut some themselves. The children respond well to staff and chat easily with them about things they have done at home. The children are provided with a suitable range of age appropriate activities and experiences, which encourage them to learn new skills.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff have a generally secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and apply this knowledge to plan and deliver the curriculum; they support children well in their play and use good questioning skills. These skills encourage the children to share what they already know, helps them to increase their knowledge and develop further. Consequently, children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Written plans provide suitable guidance to staff about focused activities relating to the six areas of learning. However, these plans are not consistently evaluated, and do not show how activities are extended to meet individual children's needs with regard to their different stages of development. Key workers knowledge of individual children are used to diversify plans to meet individual needs.

Staff verbally relay observations and assessments of the children to key workers who use these to complete Early Learning Assessment sheets for each child. This informal method relies entirely on staff recall and does not guarantee an accurate recording of children's progression along the stepping stones towards achieving the early learning goals.

Children are happy, settled and becoming increasingly independent. They play co-operatively in small groups and are generally well behaved. The children understand the concept of sharing and give threaded reel necklaces to their friends saying "it's nice to share". Children help each other when donning aprons for messy play and putting out and tidying away toys. However, opportunities for extending children's learning and independence through adult-led and routine activities such as snack-time are often missed.

Children's early communication skills are satisfactory. They speak clearly and with confidence to both their peers and staff, expressing their thoughts and talking actively within their play. Children sit well and most listen with focus, contributing and responding to questions at group time. Children help themselves to books. They show respect for the books turning the pages carefully and putting them away after use. Children are able to see letters and words written around the room, on displays and storage drawers. Children can recognise their own names and some are able to recognise the initial sound in words and know which letters represent some of the sounds, for example, Monday begins with 'm'. Although children have free access to writing materials in the small room and use them for mark-making during child-initiated activities, they are not encouraged to write their names on their pictures. Instead, staff label these and therefore do not enable children to extend their writing skills.

Children are using maths in everyday activities. They use mathematical language during play, such as up, down, over and under. Many of the children can name basic shapes and some can differentiate between big and small. They count by rote as they count the number of children at registration and confidently count to 12 and recognise the number on the number chart.

Children show an interest in numbers and persist for some time looking at, comparing and identifying numbers on number cards and the clock face. However, children are given few opportunities to begin using maths for simple calculation.

The children have good opportunities to express themselves and take part in creative activities. They really enjoy role play and have regular opportunities to experience free painting, play dough, cutting, sticking, and dressing-up. Children's access to programmable toys and technology is limited. Through planned activities the children are learning about the world they live in. They learn about the significance of different festivals and customs, enjoy tasting different foods and identify their holiday destinations on the world map.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Behaviour is generally good; children are familiar with the routine and know what is expected of them, for example, they know that when the child holding Freddie the Frog is speaking the rest need to be listening quietly and remind each other of the rule by holding fingers to their lips, saying "shh, we have to listen". There are positive techniques used to support and encourage good behaviour though expectations of children's behaviour are not consistently applied by all staff. This does not set clear boundaries for the children nor promote their understanding of right and wrong.

Children are content and happy in the setting and those who are new to the groups are supported well by key workers to help them settle and feel secure. Themework, activities and an adequate range of resources ensure that children are beginning to develop an understanding of diversity. There are appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with staff maintaining positive relationships and working closely with parents and outside agencies. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There is an informal, relaxed and supportive feel to the setting and staff discuss issues with parents on a regular basis and obtain information from them to ensure consistency of care. The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding is satisfactory. They receive regular verbal feedback from staff and benefit from an informal, open-door policy where they are welcome to view their children's assessment records and talk to key workers about progress. Various information about the learning objectives and activities is available for parents through notice-boards and regular newsletters. Parents are invited to become involved in their child's learning by joining the parent's rota and sharing their skills within the group.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and are supported to develop an effective team. They are given opportunities to further develop their skills, for example, attending training in various aspects of early years childcare and education. Staff meet regularly to discuss issues and plan for children's learning. The manager conducts annual appraisals to support staff development.

Sound vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work within the setting. Staffing levels are good and there is an effective contingency plan to cover for staff absence. There are effective procedures in place to protect children from persons who have not been vetted.

Policies and procedures clearly outline how the setting operates in practice. Most records are well-maintained and organised to ensure they are easily accessible when required.

Overall, the needs of all of the children who attend are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to produce an action plan which demonstrates how Ofsted is notified of all significant events and to conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action(s) to be taken to minimise identified risks. These issues have been satisfactorily addressed by delegating the task of keeping Ofsted informed to the committee secretary and staff complete a risk assessment chart daily to identify any potential risks. In addition, the provider agreed to improve some documentation; currently accident records are consistently well-detailed, the attendance register shows the arrival and departure times of children if different from the core opening times and the child protection procedures are being updated in line with legislation. The provider also agreed to improve opportunities for children to explore issues of diversity and to maintain the small playroom at an adequate and comfortable temperature. The range of multi-cultural play resources and activities have been satisfactorily extended and at the time of this inspection the small playroom is heated to a comfortable level. These actions are effective in safeguarding children's welfare.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to promote opportunities for children to use their ideas to initiate activities and play experiences. Time is given during each session for children to be involved in activities of their choice. Staff place a varied and interesting selection of resources on tables or on the floor for children to choose what they want to play with and have free movement between items of their choice. There is some low-level storage containing play resources and children are also able to select items from these units. There were also to be improved opportunities for children to explore books in comfort. Children now have access to comfortable seating and a suitable selection of picture and reading books within the small playroom.

Finally, the provider was asked to produce a systematic way of planning the curriculum to promote all aspects of the early learning goals, make clear what children are expected to learn and ensure children are suitably challenged; also to implement a developmental assessment system and to link this information to the planning of the curriculum. The setting has made some progress in this area; staff produce long, medium and short term plans covering the six areas of learning and use Early Learning Assessment sheets to record children's progress. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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):

- increase children's freedom of choice and independence during adult-led creative activities
- develop knowledge and understanding of ways to consistently manage children's behaviour to help them understand what is expected of them and have an awareness of the boundaries and behavioural expectations within the setting.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to extend their early writing skills, begin to have an awareness about the concept of calculation and to develop their independence within play and routine activities
- ensure that evaluation of planning and observation of children's achievements are used effectively to inform plans for next steps in individual children's learning.

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