



Bicton Heath Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224041
Inspection date	30 October 2006
Inspector	Dianne Andrews
Setting Address	Pensfold, Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 5HF
Telephone number	01743 231302
E-mail	
Registered person	Mrs Lorraine Evans & Miss Anita Evans
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?

Bicton Heath Pre-School opened in 1986 and has been operating from its current location since 1996. It operates from two rooms in a community hall, which is a multi-use building. It is situated in the Bicton Heath area, in Shrewsbury. The setting serves the local area.

The Pre-school is registered to provide care for up to 26 children. There are currently 37 children from two to five years on roll. This includes children in receipt of funded nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children who have special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term-times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 15:15, Tuesday and Wednesday and 09:00 until 12:45 on a Monday, Thursday and Friday. There

are five staff working with the children, of these, over half hold recognised child care qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health and well-being is promoted well as they learn to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating snacks, however, most children are not aware of the reasons why they do this. To safeguard children's welfare, accidents or incidents are recorded and shared with parents or carers, and any medication administered is documented appropriately.

Children enthusiastically eat their snacks of toast or a variety of fruit, this helps them to learn to make healthy choices about their food. They have access to drinking water throughout the session to enable them to meet their own needs if they become thirsty. Children enjoy staying to the lunch club, where they eat their packed lunches, which are provided by parents, while sitting and socialising together along with staff members.

Children have suitable opportunities to take part in physical play within the daily routine. The pre-school does not have access to an outdoor area and staff recognise the need to ensure that they find other ways of developing children's physical skills. They do this in the indoor environment through the introduction of sit and ride sessions, use of an indoor climbing frame and various movement games. On occasions, children are taken on nature walks in the locality and to use a play park, to offer fresh air and exercise. They develop other skills, such as the use of scissors, pencil control and threading within their play activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to choose from a very good range of activities that are provided by the staff. The group have had many problems with vandalism and the outside of the building has been damaged on numerous occasions. Staff have worked particularly hard to make the indoor environment welcoming and child-friendly. They prepare the activities before the children arrive, adorning the walls with displays and posters. This means that children and parents are comfortable in the setting, which is bright, colourful and interesting.

There are some suitable procedures in place to monitor the safety of children in the setting and reduce the risks of accidental injury. For instance, fire exits are checked to make sure they are operable and are not obstructed and toys and equipment is checked for damage and suitability. However, daily safety checks are not consistently effective, for example the kitchen area is accessible to children who leave the activity room to use the toilet. Although children usually use the disabled toilet facilities the other toilets are not checked to ensure that they are in a safe condition. The system for welcoming children and parents at the start of the day is not effective in ensuring that unauthorised access to the building is prevented. Consequently, children's safety is compromised. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through the

regular practising of the emergency evacuation procedures, this is particularly important because of the problems that the group have had with vandals.

Key staff have attended training in child protection awareness to ensure that children are protected from harm or neglect. The child protection policy has been updated and reflects current local procedures to promote children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children arrive at the setting with enthusiasm and most leave their parents and carers confidently. Those that need reassurance are offered appropriate support and reassurance and consequently settle quickly. They form strong friendships with their peers and enjoy warm and affectionate relationships with staff. Activities and resources are well-organised before children arrive so they are purposefully occupied in a busy and cheerful environment.

Younger children do not currently benefit from the 'Birth to three matters' framework, however staff are aware of the importance of providing suitable activities that meet younger children's needs and are developing their understanding of the framework.

Nursery Education

The quality and teaching of learning is good. Children are confident learners and explore the well-planned environment with eager curiosity. Staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a range of interesting activities that enable children to progress well in most areas of learning. Children benefit from the free-flow play environment, but have limited opportunities to make independent choices and develop their own learning. There is a good balance of free play and adult directed activities, although the reliance on worksheets and templates does not encourage children to develop their imaginations.

Planning is decided by the staff team and offers children a wide range of practical activities that reflect their interests. Key activities, however, lack detail, such as the learning focus and ways to extend children's learning. Opportunities for extending children's learning through spontaneous activities, particularly in the concepts of mathematics, such as counting and early calculation, are also often missed. This means that the full range of children's abilities is not always recognised and more able children may not realise their potential.

Children socialise happily, chatting to each other as they play. They show a good awareness of their own needs and independently access drinking water, use the toilet or blow their own noses. They communicate clearly and confidently, initiating conversations with their peers or the adults around them. They enjoy helping with necessary tasks, such as tidying away the toys before snack time.

Older children identify their own names with confidence at snack time, but the activity is not tailored to suit children's stages of development and younger children struggle to find their name card. On the whole, they enjoy sharing stories with staff and each other and point out words and pictures as they predict what happens next. They have a developing knowledge of

letters, are beginning to understand how words are formed and know some initial letters and sounds. They make marks in the writing area and during craft activities, but do not have opportunities to write for a purpose during their play in other areas.

Children recognise shapes and use mathematical language in their play, such as high, wide, short and long. They have access to many colourful and interesting examples of number lines around the room. However, opportunities to make use of the number lines for recognition of numerals, to count or develop skills for calculation during everyday activities are often missed. Children learn about their local environment through walks and visits, such as, helping plant flowers at the nearby home for the elderly. They extend their understanding of the wider world as they look at festivals that other cultures celebrate and they also enjoy learning French at a session provided by a parent of the group.

Children enthusiastically take part in imaginative activities such as role play, using a good variety of dressing up clothes and accessories. They delight at finding Halloween outfits for them to use. They explore a wide range of materials, such as those for construction, play dough, sand, water and paint. These are used effectively to help them develop their imaginations. They are supported well by staff as they mix their chosen colour of brown to paint a broomstick. Music helps children explore sounds and they are keen to use a variety of musical instruments to accompany their favourite songs, many are developing a sense of rhythm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed into the setting, which ensures they feel valued and comfortable. They develop a sense of belonging because the settling in procedures help to ensure children are familiar with the staff and routines of the provision. However, parents do not have easy access to the policies of the setting, including the procedures for making a complaint.

Children have opportunities to play with a range of resources which help them to value diversity. They take part in planned activities that help them to understand how others live, such as, looking at aspects of the Divali festival of light. Children with disabilities or learning difficulties are offered effective support. Staff liaise with parents and, where necessary, other professionals to ensure children's needs are met.

Children are beginning to understand responsible behaviour through consistent strategies used by staff to take account of individual children's stages of development. Most children behave well or are reminded of the rules of expected behaviour by staff who provide positive role models by being calm and polite. Children are familiar and comfortable with the routines of the session, quickly lining up for story time or for washing hands before snack time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good.

Effective information sharing ensures that children are cared for according to their parents wishes. They benefit from regular verbal feedback from children's key-workers and consultation

sessions where they are welcome to view their child's assessment records and talk to staff about progress. They receive written information about the education provision through newsletters and the prospectus, this includes some information about how children learn through the Foundation Stage. They are encouraged to be actively involved in the development of the service through attendance at the fundraising committee meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff work as a team to provide effective support, helping children enjoy a wide range of activities. Children are well cared for and progress well because staff have a commitment to their own professional development and undertake training to widen their knowledge and develop good early years practice. For example, they are aware of the importance of developing their knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the care given to children aged under three years.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by well-maintained and generally comprehensive documentation. Staff and parents work together to ensure that all necessary consents are in place and that information about children's care is relevant and up to date. The daily register includes times of children's attendance to protect their well-being, but the staff register and visitor's record are not sufficiently detailed.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The partners, who continue to work directly with the children, assess the nursery education and generally identify areas for improvement, such as changes in the way planning is organised. They are also working towards a quality award and using this process as a means of reviewing and improving the service. Children progress well in most of the areas of learning because staff plan and provide a good range of interesting and meaningful activities. They meet together to agree on future training needs and take advice from the local authority development workers to help improve their practice. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure that parents counter-sign the medication records. This is now being done. Although changes in legislation from October 2005 remove the requirement to do so, it remains good practice.

At the last education inspection the pre-school was asked to encourage children to be socially interactive and to extend their language and communication skills during snack times. Children confidently talk together and with staff during snack and meal times which is a social, comfortable occasion. This helps them to develop their communication and language skills.

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):

- ensure the safety of children; improve the arrangements for children's arrival, make the kitchen inaccessible and check that all areas of the building are suitable for children's use

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):

- develop planned activities to provide differentiation; offering support for those children who need it and sufficient challenge for the more able children
- provide regular opportunities to count and practise early calculation skills and for children to make independent choices and develop their own learning within the daily routine.

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