



Busy Bees Montessori Nursery Schools Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251744
Inspection date	22 November 2006
Inspector	Margaret Elizabeth Roberts
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Registered person	Busy Bees Montessori Nursery Schools Ltd
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?

Busy Bees Montessori Nursery School opened in 1982. It operates from five rooms in a purpose built building which incorporates a swimming pool. It is situated in Beck Row, Suffolk. A maximum of 111 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 06.45 until 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year and also runs a breakfast and after school club. All children share access to secure enclosed outdoor play areas and have supervised access to the small outdoor organic farm within the boundary.

There are currently 266 children from two to under eight years on roll. Of these 179 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 childcare staff. Of these, 12 hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted because staff take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when children are ill. Very good hygiene practices are followed throughout the nursery, where surfaces and bathroom areas are kept exceptionally clean because staff use anti-bacterial cleansing materials and encourage children to flush the chain after going to the toilet. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene through the daily routine. They wash their hands before eating and after going to the toilet and know that it is to get rid of the germs. Children's medical needs are very well met because almost every member of staff has been trained in first aid and first aid boxes are available in each room. All relevant documentation is in place, such as accurate recordings of medication giving and accidents, of which parents are given a copy. Permission has been obtained from parents for the seeking of medical advice or treatment which ensures that children can be cared for appropriately should an emergency arise.

Children learn about how important it is to eat healthy and nutritious food because they are actively involved in the growing of crops on the farm. They plant seeds, water them and watch them grow, harvest the food and then sell it in the small farm shop that is situated within the nursery grounds. Most children eat a healthy diet all of which is provided by their parents in consultation with nursery staff. Breakfast cereals, snacks for morning and afternoon and packed lunches are all brought in from home and served by staff. Lunch boxes are checked by staff and food requiring refrigeration is transferred for safe storage. Designated kitchen areas in each room are kept clean ensuring that food prepared here is safe for children to consume. School age children in the after school club are offered a sweet biscuit and drink of squash when they arrive which has an impact on the younger children who are encouraged to eat a healthy diet. Fresh drinking water is available in each room and also a water container is situated in the reception area, which ensures that children do not go thirsty. Children who suffer from allergies are very well cared for because information from parents is requested and displayed in each food preparation area of for staff to refer to.

Children enjoy a very healthy lifestyle where their large physical skills are extremely well promoted through a wide range of outdoor equipment. They move confidently with agility and control, running, balancing and riding tricycles, negotiating pathways with ease. They have opportunities to help with the animals on the farm, collecting eggs from the hens and recycling many forms of waste. Their eye-hand coordination skills are encouraged through activities such as cutting out shapes, threading and manipulating small items such as baking peas with tweezers with increasing accuracy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed into an environment that is vibrant and exciting, where they have access to the necessary facilities and range of activities that promote their development in all areas. They are given a real sense of belonging because their work and photographs of what they have been doing are attractively displayed throughout the nursery. Children are able to move freely between activities which are organised well, covering all areas of learning and care. For example, children independently access role play, intellectual games or rest and relax in the quiet area where they can lay down on bean bags to look at books. The outdoor play area is accessed from each room, it is completely fenced and gated and good supervision by staff ensures children's safety at all times.

Children's varying needs are met exceptionally well because they have access to an excellent range of equipment and activities that create an accessible and very stimulating environment. They are able to use furniture competently because it is child size and in very good condition. Furniture, equipment and toys are more than sufficient in quantity allowing for groups of children to play and eat together.

Children play safely because the nursery has taken very good steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises both inside and outside are minimised. Risk assessments are taken regularly and reviewed to ensure that everything listed is still valid. Children are unable to leave the premises unsupervised because of the very good systems in place. For example, children are supervised at all times by staff, there are controlled entry systems on external doors, viewing cameras have been fitted in each room, linked to the manager's office and mirrors have been positioned over areas such as the role play area so that staff can see at a glance if children are playing safely. The outside area is completely enclosed and children's play equipment is positioned on a soft play area covered with bark. The nature pool and boating pool are fenced and gated, the trampoline is at ground level and has a safety net surrounding it which ensures that children are able to use this apparatus safely. Children are kept safe in the event of a fire because the nursery has the necessary fire fighting equipment in place and staff have been trained on how to use it correctly. Children learn the evacuation procedures because they take part in fire drills that are taken in accordance with the Fire Officer's recommendations. They travel safely on the school buses because they wear appropriate restraints and vehicles are regularly serviced and checked.

Children are protected should abuse or neglect be suspected because all staff are fully aware of how to safeguard children. They have undertaken training, are aware of the effective procedures that the nursery has in place and are able to recognise signs and symptoms.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children relish their time spent at the nursery where they arrive eagerly and settle in exceptionally quickly, separating from parents and carers with ease. Children play a dynamic part in the setting. They are animated and enthusiastic, making decisions about their play and learning through self-selection from a broad range of activities. Children's care and learning is

significantly enhanced through the exceptional organisation of each room which allows for freedom of movement between activities. Each classroom ensures that all children are offered the same or similar experiences, which means that when they progress to the next age group the transition is made comfortably, without undue stress for any child. Children's individual needs are met because they are provided with opportunities that help to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. They are supported well in their play by staff who are caring in their approach and are able to recognise the needs of every child in their care. Children have wonderful opportunities to help on the small organic farm where they not only grow crops but learn about the care of small animals and the importance of recycling the daily rubbish. For example, they collect all types of waste depositing it in the village recycling bins or the animal droppings in the 'wormery'. Sheep shearing and wool taken from the alpacas' is spun and children learn that this is then used to make clothes. They are offered swimming lessons given by a qualified instructor and also take part in ballet. Exceptionally good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which is extremely well linked into the Foundation Stage, helps children aged from two to under three move onto the early learning goals with confidence. Children in the after school club enjoy their time with staff taking part in a variety of activities. During holiday times they have the opportunity to take part in several field trips which offers them a range of outdoor pursuits.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching provides realistic challenge for all groups of children through a wide range of activities and experiences that help children progress towards the early learning goals. Children are grouped appropriately according to their stage of development and teaching methods challenge and support children to achieve as much as they can. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and how children learn, for example, by providing exciting, stimulating activities that help them learn through their play. Planning is shared by all staff throughout the nursery and is based on continuous provision to promote learning objectives, based on what children can do. For example, staff involve parents in their child's education by finding out what they can do prior to them attending the nursery. This is then recorded and activities are developed to target individual children to move them onto the next stage of learning. Short term planning includes a range of activities and experiences indoors and outdoors to help children progress towards the early learning goals. The nursery has set up a process for staff to observe children's progress and record this in individual assessment folders. Most staff are using this to advantage and use this to record how children approach learning, what needs to be included in the next steps and the progress the child is making towards the early learning goals. However, some assessment folders do not show clearly the process of how the child is achieving and does not give the reader a clear picture of the child's progress.

Children are making very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas particularly in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children throughout the nursery are confident learners, approaching adults with ease. They sustain interest for long periods of time through self-chosen and adult-led activities. For example, using tweezers to place baking peas onto a suction soap holder until every suction pad is covered with a dried pea. Children play well together, sharing and taking turns. They are extremely well-behaved and respond positively to staff. Their independence is encouraged at

many opportunities and they take responsibility for themselves by attempting to put on their coats. Children enjoy listening to stories, often joining in and completing the sentence. They are putting meanings to marks and some children are able to write their own names and that of others, forming recognisable letters.

Children use number in everyday situations such as counting themselves as they line up to go outside. Most children are able to count to twelve and beyond. They learn about shape through activities such as matching games and are able to put patterns into sequence. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is extremely well-promoted because they have access to the organic farm where they learn about the cycle of living things such as plants and animals. Through planned topics they learn about our diverse culture and have links with the local community through visits by the fire service and joining in with the local church at festival times. They have opportunity in each room to access computers where they used the 'mouse' competently and with precision.

Children's creative talent is promoted through a wide range of activities where they are able to express themselves freely. Staff provide learning opportunities to promote their imagination which they change to suit themselves. For example, they helped to create a dinosaur park with bark, wood pieces and large leaves. When the member of staff stepped back to observe the activity, they changed it into a jungle, using animals such as tigers and elephants. Children are able to recognise different colours and know that colours will change if another is added. For example, when staff asked them what would happen if white was added to the mixture of paint, they were able to say that the colour would lighten.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about equality through their play and learning where they are encouraged to be kind to one another. They are valued by staff who listen and talk to children offering them access to appropriate resources, activities and facilities. Children's self-esteem is promoted through appropriate praise and individual needs are met through discussion with parents. Children with special needs are cared for very well because staff are trained appropriately and work very closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure that the needs of all children can be met.

Children behave exceptionally well because staff are able to manage a wide range of behaviour in a way that promotes their welfare and development. Children know what is expected of them because staff have adopted a consistent and positive approach in managing their behaviour. Staff are very good role models and use techniques such as intervention and distraction. Children's level of understanding and maturity are taken into consideration and they learn about right and wrong through explanations by staff as to why the behaviour is unacceptable. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given very good quality information about the nursery which informs them of the Foundation Stage and Montessori teaching methods. Regular newsletters and notice boards throughout the nursery ensure that they are kept fully informed of the activities their children are taking part in. Parents are encouraged

to become involved in their children's learning and care by helping out in the nursery where their individual skills are put to good use. For example, a parent who used to be a librarian for young children, reads to children individually or at story times, using props such as puppets. Sharing of information and consent for a number of different activities ensures that children can be cared for in accordance with their parents wishes. Parents comment on how pleased they are with the nursery, how settled their children are and never want to come home. Parents are very happy with the induction they receive when first approaching the nursery and how welcoming staff are.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's welfare and learning is enhanced because the organisation of the nursery is extremely effective and staff have the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications. The very robust systems in place for the recruiting and vetting of staff ensure that all persons looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

The excellent deployment of staff who know their roles and responsibilities, along with the extremely well organised space and resources meets children's needs effectively. The good use of a key worker system and the knowledge of the staff ensures that each child's individual needs are appropriately met according to their stage of development, therefore meeting the child's needs at all times. The registration system that has been devised ensures that all persons on the premises including the children, staff and visitors can be accounted for at all times.

All relevant documentation is in place and the nursery has a working set of policies and procedures, which underpins the extremely successful management of the nursery and has a positive impact on the care children receive. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the nursery is outstanding. Managers set clear directions for staff, leading to improvements in the organisation of the nursery education and the outcomes for children. Staff are motivated by the nursery leaders who encourage them to take an active part within in the setting which helps to build a strong staff team, committed to improving the care and education for all children. In depth self-evaluation, undertaken by every member of staff, helps the nursery to assess its own strengths and weaknesses, identifying areas for improvement. Management have acted upon advice from outside agencies, including recommendations from previous inspections and minor weaknesses in the recording of children's assessments have already begun to be identified.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to ensure that the parent is given a copy of the record of any accident their child may suffer and extend the risk assessments to include the church hall and the boating pool.

At the last nursery education inspection the nursery was asked to structure the planning of activities to take into account the needs of both the youngest and most able children and build

into the session adult time in the book corner to encourage and increase children's enjoyment of books.

The nursery has made good improvements. Children's health and safety have been improved because the nursery now gives a copy of any accidents that occur to children, to their parents, to ensure that they are fully informed of any injuries that may be sustained. The risk assessments have been further extended to include the boating pool and village hall so that hazards to children are minimised. Children's learning has been enhanced because planning of activities takes into account the needs of both the youngest and most able children through the use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and ensuring that all children are challenged appropriately. Children enjoy story times immensely either by being read to in a large group by a member of staff or in the book corner, individually or supported by staff.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received a complaint that a child had been left unsupervised on the nursery premises where there is a swimming pool. This complaint raises concerns in relation to National Standards 2(Organisation), 4(Physical environment), 6(Safety), 12(Working in partnership with parents and carers) and 14(Documentation). Ofsted undertook an unannounced visit on 28 March 2006 to investigate these concerns. Ofsted found no evidence to suggest a breach of National Standards 2, 4, 12 and 14 but Ofsted did find evidence of a breach of National Standard 6. Ofsted has issued the provider with an action to complete under National Standard 6 as follows:

Standard 6 - produce and submit an action plan outlining how you will ensure that children are supervised at all times. A satisfactory response to this action was received on 20 April 2006. Ofsted is satisfied that the provider remains qualified for 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.

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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 that all children are offered healthy and nutritious food in adequate quantities for their needs.

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):

- enable all staff to continue to improve the assessments of children's progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk