



Bidston Avenue Early Years Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY232861
Inspection date	31 October 2006
Inspector	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott
Setting Address	Tollemache Road, Claughton, Birkenhead, CH41 0DQ
Telephone number	0151 653 3291
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Registered person	Bidston Avenue Early Years Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional 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 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?

Bidston Avenue Early Years pre school and out of school club has been established for four years. It operates from Bidston Avenue Primary School, in Birkenhead on the Wirral peninsular. Both facilities have access to the classrooms, the school halls and outdoor play areas. The pre school and out of school clubs are open five days a week in term time only. The pre school is open from 09.00 to 11.30 and 12.30 to 15.00 and the out of school club's hours are 08.00 to 09.00 and 15.15 to 18.00.

There are currently 48 children aged three to under eight on roll in the pre school and 14 children on roll for the out of school club. The provision is in receipt of funding to provide nursery education for three and four-year-old children. Both facilities support children with learning difficulties and disabilities. All staff hold appropriate childcare qualification and are

encouraged to access additional external training. The pre school also have the support of an early years teacher.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children begin to understand the importance of good self-care skills as they wash their hands at appropriate times. They learn about keeping clean as they talk about getting 'rid of germs' before snack time. Children benefit from the good hygiene procedures in the pre school, which are implemented effectively by all staff. For example, pre school is cleaned between each of the morning and afternoon sessions. In the out of school club staff preparing snacks wear aprons and gloves, and colour-coded cloths are used for cleaning. This helps to keep children healthy and protected from the spread of possible infection. Accident and medication records are in place and are maintained well. Children are suitably cared for if they become ill and are protected through staff's sound knowledge of first aid, medication routines, and the procedure to follow in the event of an accident.

Staff further promote children's good health, by encouraging them to eat fresh fruit and vegetables for snack. In the out of school club children have a varied diet including curry, pitted bread, pasta and beans or spaghetti on toast. For breakfast, they have cereals, toast, and choose from apple juice, milk or water to drink. Children sit together during snack times, which are sociable occasions, when children chat to their friends. Older children participate in organising the foods for snack, for example, by helping to make sandwiches, and by pouring their own drinks.

Children enjoy physical activity and have daily opportunities to play outside in the fresh air. They participate in a range of activities developing their co-ordination and gross motor skills. They skilfully pedal wheeled toys, use climbing frames, throw and catch and demonstrate a good understanding of spatial awareness. Children in the out of school clubs use large climbing and swinging equipment. Younger children also go on walks to local places of interest. Consequently, all children gain a sound understanding of the importance of regular exercise as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

All areas are bright and welcoming and children's work is displayed around the room, making them feel valued. Staff photographs are on display, so that parents can familiarise themselves with their child's key worker. Children benefit from the well-organised, stimulating learning environment. Most children enter the setting confidently at the beginning of each session. They are familiar with the layout and move around the environment, both inside and out, making their own choices about their play. Space is well organised and used effectively to allow children opportunities to engage in physical activities, table top and floor activities and opportunities to relax and share books in a comfortable environment with beanbags, small sofas and cushions.

Children use a range of resources and equipment that is developmentally appropriate for their age and stage of development and conforms to safety standards. Children independently access play materials and equipment safely, and these include activities set out on a daily basis, for example, books, role play, sensory play and writing areas. Enough tables and chairs enable children to play and eat together, making for a sociable atmosphere. All resources are clean and well maintained.

Staff keep a record of visitors, so they are aware of the adults who are on the premises, to ensure children remain safe. They are vigilant about children's safety when playing in the outdoor play area, and check for any hazards, discarding any broken toys to prevent accidents. Staff cover electrical sockets and keep dangerous substances out of children's reach. An emergency evacuation procedure is in place, which children practise

regularly, so they are able to leave the premises safely and swiftly. Children are kept safe at the setting because staff identify most risks to children and are vigilant in observing their whereabouts. Staff have taken most steps to minimise any risks to children, such as ensuring plug sockets are covered, however, the faulty microwave used during the baking activity in pre school poses a risk to children. The procedures for escorting children to and from the out of school clubs are sound. However, there is no written procedure for a child who is not collected.

The child protection policy contains the required information, and most staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and know what action to take should they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures they quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in their best interests. However, most staff are not familiar with the procedure relating to an allegation made about a staff member or volunteer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children at the out of school clubs have a variety of activities available to them and take part in deciding what they are going to do. For example, they take part in a word search, colouring, snooker and role play. Some children sit and do homework; others make firework pictures and play with play dough, which they have helped to make that day. After playing outside on the climbing equipment they enjoy games in the main hall, including 'what's the time Mr Wolf?' and musical statues. Children have a good relationship with staff who try hard to make the sessions fun.

Children at the pre school also enjoy positive relationships with staff. They arrive happy and are enthusiastic in their approach to play. All children who attend are three and four-year-olds receiving funding for nursery education.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a satisfactory knowledge of the Foundation Stage, understand children's needs and provide a sufficient range of activities and experiences. However, they are less secure in their knowledge of the stepping stones in order to fully support the learning needs of each child. Staff are not secure at present in their

understanding of how to evaluate and extend activities when planning. Therefore, insufficient challenge may be provided to the more able children. Staff feel they know the children's abilities, however, observations are not currently used to inform the assessment record and children's progress through the stepping stones. Therefore, there is no record to enable staff to fully identify where children require additional support, and consequently children do not always achieve their full potential. Some staff lack an understanding of how to promote children's learning across all aspects of the session, such as daily routines, incidental opportunities and children's self-chosen play. Consequently, many learning opportunities go unnoticed, which impacts on children's progress in these areas.

Overall, children are making sound progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are happy and secure in the pre school environment and display positive attitudes towards play and learning. They show good levels of concentration during some activities, although concentration sometimes deteriorates when they sit in a large group at story time. They are purposefully occupied and generally get on well with one another and with the staff who care for them. For example, two children congratulate each other when they build a tower together. Children are developing independence and self-help skills as they put on their own aprons and attend to personal hygiene, but staff do not make good use of daily routines to maximise all learning opportunities for children. For example, staff serve snack, and children do not have the opportunity to help or pour their own drinks.

Children enjoy looking at books, independently and with others. They have some opportunities to practise emergent writing through planned activities and writing their names on their work. However, children have less opportunity to develop writing on a day-to-day basis, as the writing table is not always stocked with writing materials and everyday activities, such as role play is not used to promote this. Children enjoy listening to stories but do not have enough opportunity to talk within a familiar group. They learn to link sounds and letters as they respond to, 'whose name begins with E and J'.

Children are beginning to recognise and name colours and shapes. They are beginning to use mathematical language, such as bigger, heavier, smaller and melting as they take part in everyday activities. Children generally display good counting skills. However, staff provide insufficient opportunities to extend children's understanding of number and calculation through the daily routine and through children's self-chosen play. For example, children are not encouraged to count the number of boys and girls present at story time, the number of drinks at snack time, or the pieces of chocolate in the baking activity.

Children are encouraged to explore and investigate. They have opportunities to go on walks around the local area collecting things for the nature table, such as fir cones, acorns and leaves. They make bird feeders and are given opportunities to construct in various forms, building towers with construction equipment. They use their senses and investigate different materials, such as play dough, cooking ingredients, sand and water. Children confidently use information technology and expertly manoeuvre the mouse at the computer.

Children move confidently with good spatial awareness around the room and in the outside play area. They carefully manoeuvre wheeled toys, climb on the climbing frame, rush around

with prams and throw and catch balls. They enjoy physical activity and delight in being outside in the fresh air. Some of their regular activities are also provided outdoors. Children are developing movement to parts of their bodies as they take part in a range of action rhyme and songs and do music and movement in the main hall once a week.

There are good opportunities available for children to take part in imaginative play. Space is allocated to a role play area where children make up their own stories and situations. Children have opportunities to explore different materials and express their creative ideas. They absorb themselves with painting and play imaginatively with the play dough. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes, but the planning does not detail how children can explore sounds, and how these can be changed.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and greeted on their arrival, and staff's caring and friendly approach help children to feel confident in their surroundings. Staff obtain detailed information from parents about each child and receive all appropriate consents to ensure children's welfare is promoted. Regular informal discussions with parents help children's continuity of care. Children's sound relationships with the staff are evident and in turn staff value children and ensure they are free from discrimination. This is done by ensuring all children are able to join in with all the activities available. Staff listen carefully to what children have to say, helping them to feel good about themselves.

Children are beginning to learn about the wider world in which they live and find out about other countries as they access resources that reflect different aspects of diversity. However, visual images and resources reflecting disability are limited in pre school meaning that children's learning to value similarities and differences is not maximised. There are good systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and staff work effectively with parents and external agencies towards their planned targets.

Staff manage children's behaviour consistently. Clear rules and boundaries are in place, ensuring the children know what is expected of them. Children's behaviour is encouraged by staff praising and reinforcing their conduct. They learn to share and negotiate during specific group activities. Staff are positive role models, so children begin to understand right from wrong and behave well, because staff give clear explanations in relation to each child's level of understanding. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff make parents feel welcome and take time to talk and listen to them about their children. They gain information from parents, such as emergency contact details, medical information and family circumstances. Children benefit from this exchange of information as it ensures their individual needs are fully met. Staff have built up good relationships with the parents, who speak highly of both groups and the staff.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. They are pleased with the services they receive, and are given information about the setting and the curriculum. Parents also receive regular information about the planned themes but they do not always have access to their children's

progress records and are not always able to contribute to their child's learning at home. This means that parents are not always kept fully informed about their children's progress and achievements. A display board, photographs and folders, which are available for perusal in the reception area, also contains the setting's policies and procedures, however, some information is not up to date.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The rooms are laid out into areas that allow children to play imaginatively, be active, creative and have quiet space for relaxing, looking at books and listening to stories. Staff show a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are deployed effectively to ensure children are well supervised. There are suitable contingency plans in place to cover for absences to ensure staff ratios are maintained. There are satisfactory recruitment and vetting procedures in place, however, the system that informs the regulator of new supervisory staff is not effective.

Most mandatory records are in place, although the procedure to follow in the event of a child not been collected has been overlooked. All records are confidential and well maintained. This helps ensure the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team and clear communication, such as daily briefings, regular team meetings and planning, allows them to provide a reasonably balanced programme of activities and experiences for children. Staff are not always confident in their understanding of the stepping stones, and as a result there are insufficient opportunities to extend children's understanding and achievements in all the areas of learning. The management committee informally evaluates the provision for nursery education and have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses within the setting. They aim to further review policies and practices. The current system in place to monitor the curriculum and the impact this has on children's individual progress towards the early learning goals is not yet effective. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, the provider was asked to explore ways that the policies of the pre school could be made available to parents, that would enable them to take them home to read or indeed to have a copy of such policies. The provider has produced a pack containing all of the setting's policies and procedures. This is placed in a box in the reception area for pre school, which is accessible for parents.

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.

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 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 hazardous items are inaccessible to children and that all equipment used is safe and in good repair
- write a procedure for an uncollected child, that is understood by all staff and made available to parents
- extend visual images and resources within the play room, which promote equality of opportunity to include disability
- implement an effective system to ensure that Ofsted is notified promptly of all new staff in supervisory roles so they may submit to necessary vetting procedures.
- ensure that the child protection procedure clearly identifies action to be taken if an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer and that this is understood by all staff

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 staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage so that they know how to use everyday routines to maximise children's learning in all areas
- develop the process for differentiation and identification of next steps in learning for individual children to effectively inform future planning and to complete the observation, assessment and planning cycle
- develop written assessments to ensure that they cover each of the different aspects of the early learning goals, linked to the stepping stones and make sure that parents are given the opportunity to contribute to the assessment process.

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