



Beehive Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	321543
Inspection date	09 November 2006
Inspector	Rosemary Beyer
Setting Address	Low Moor Centre, Bray Road, Fulford Road, York, North Yorkshire, YO10 4JG
Telephone number	01904 662 172
E-mail	www.beehive.f9.co.uk
Registered person	Beehive Pre-School Playgroup
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Beehive Pre-School Playgroup first opened over 10 years ago. It is run by a committee and is sponsored by the Army. It operates from a community building in the village of Fulford which is located on the outskirts of York. The facilities include a large playroom, a smaller room for group activities and a fenced garden area with both grass and soft surfaces.

The group serves both the families of the Army personnel and the local community. There are currently 45 children on roll including 27 in receipt of nursery grant funding. The group is supporting children who have English as an additional language.

The playgroup takes children between the ages of two and a half and school age.

Session times are Monday to Friday mornings between 09.00 and 12.00 and Monday to Thursday afternoons between 12.40 and 15.40 during term time. A summer playscheme is operated for children who already attend the playgroup.

Four members of staff have level 3 qualifications in childcare and one is working towards this qualification. Two relief staff also work within the setting when needed. One member of staff is the special needs co-ordinator and has appropriate qualifications. Staff have an ongoing training plan for the year to support further personal development.

The nursery receives support from the development workers at the Early Years Department of the local authority. Outside advice and help is also provided by other agencies when children with learning difficulties and disabilities attend. Children's learning is play based, working within the Foundation Stage curriculum and 'Birth to three matters' framework.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for on clean and well maintained premises, where good established hygiene practice effectively protects them from the spread of infection. The children learn to wash their hands before food and after personal care, and most wash them unprompted after playing outside. They know they need to remove germs and enjoy being able to use the sink in the play room. Most of the children use the toilets independently, although they tell staff they are leaving the room and ask for help if they need it.

A sick child policy is made available to parents, who respect the need to prevent children passing on infections. They also have information about the exclusion times for infectious diseases. The children help themselves to tissues if they need to and know they must cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing. All staff have current first aid certificates and know the procedures for recording accidents and referring to Ofsted any significant injuries. All accidents are recorded and reported to parents who receive a written copy of the report, an additional sheet is completed for head injuries, and then signed by them. The first aid boxes are well stocked and checked regularly.

The children have healthy snacks provided by the group, including fruit and or cheese each time and also breadsticks or plain biscuits, but parents provide their packed lunches. Some are stored in the fridge but others are left on the trolley depending on parents' wishes as their children do not like cold food. Children have water or milk to drink and are able to have drinks at any time during the sessions. They know they need a drink after exercise or playing outside, when they get hot.

Children have fresh air each day. They all bring waterproof boots to enable them to play in the garden even if it is wet. They also use the public play area with fixed equipment next to the building, when it is not busy. Parents are reminded to bring cold weather clothes if they use the car to transport their children. During dry weather there is free-flow in and out, with good use being made of the garden. The trees provide shade during hot weather.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are protected on secure premises where parents and visitors are admitted by staff, with effective procedures in place to ensure unauthorised persons do not have access or collect children. The supervision of the collection period ensures children do not leave unobserved and only go with an authorised person. During sessions, the children are very well supervised with staff constantly available. Students, parents and any visitors do not have unsupervised access to the children.

Staff have undertaken training to ensure they have a good understanding of health and safety requirements. They have comprehensive risk assessment procedures in place to minimise accidents and hazards. Checks are completed each day to ensure the premises and resources are safe and suitable. The room is planned to give children space to move around comfortably and safely, with child-size furniture and equipment in place. Children can choose what they wish to use safely and easily, with tools and resources on shelves at their height. They help themselves and then clear up after they have finished. During the sessions, they are given time to finish activities before they need to be cleared away. The children know they must not run inside, they keep the floor clear in the main areas of the room for passing through and also sweep or mop up spillages, such as sand, compost or water. Staff ensure a good balance of natural and man made resources.

In addition to the routine safety checks, staff have contacted the local agricultural college to ask about suitable plants for children to grow, and have been advised against growing tomatoes, due to the poisonous leaves. They have also undertaken a risk assessment for the computer, purchasing a small mouse and suitable furniture to prevent injury to the children. Use of the computer is also timed.

Fire equipment is provided and maintained by the landlord, with regular fire drills completed, however, these are not recorded consistently to enable the group to monitor their evacuation procedure. Notices are displayed by the group, in both English and additional languages, to meet the needs of children and parents. Exits signs are also in several languages.

Staff have a very good knowledge of child protection, with a written policy and procedure made available to parents to advise them that the child's welfare is the staff's major concern. They have past experience of caring for children about whom there have been concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have a very good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use it to provide a wide range of activities and resources for the children who are under three years of age. Most of them are adapted from those provided for older children, but account is taken of the difference in development stage. Stories are simpler and table top games made easier if the children cannot follow the rules. All the children are cared for in a very positive environment, where they are encouraged to try new things but also able to make mistakes.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning are outstanding. The staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage. All the children use the full range of resources and are included, whether or not they have funded places. Staff plan the activities well and then monitor and evaluate them very effectively to ensure the needs of all the children are met, whatever their ability or age. They ensure there is sufficient challenge but also take account of the development of those attending, including those with little or no English. Key workers monitor and record children's personal achievements and also any concerns, although all the staff make notes if they observe something special. Photographs are taken as a permanent record, such as a child using the stilts very competently for the first time. The individual books are used to record the child's time in the group, with photographs, comments and samples of work; and are highly valued by both parents and children, who proudly discuss what they have done.

Activities are themed and the room is divided to make the most of the topics chosen, for example, part of the room celebrates autumn, with a woodland glade complete with hibernating animals, dried leaves and nuts. The children use the resources to develop their knowledge, such as leaf and bark rubbings, leaf collages, planting conkers and exploring the wood with torches on dull days. They use magnifying glasses to inspect and investigate insects and vegetation.

The children are very confident, keen to come into the group and excited about the activities they choose. They are very enthusiastic when using resources and are developing excellent concentration. All children and parents are made welcome and greeted on arrival, with staff helping new children to settle and older ones encouraging younger children to participate or provide advice. They help fill bowls with water, play games or match shoes when coming in from outside.

Free access to mark-making equipment, with name labels easily available for those unsure of how to write their names, helps all the children develop very competent writing skills. Staff guide the way they hold a pencil, and also the formation of letters to suit the local schools, after consultation with the teachers. The children use writing in role play, such as when taking orders at the café or writing prescriptions. They also like to write their names on their pictures, usually with properly formed letters.

Books and stories are a very important part of the day, with children listening quietly, contributing when asked and able to anticipate what will happen next. They know how to use books correctly, have favourite stories and help themselves to books if they need information. The atlas is particularly popular with children keen to discuss where they have been on holiday, home countries of their friends and different habitats or sources of animals or foods. The children are learning through the use of phonics to recognise letters and some are starting to read simple words. Children with English as an additional language are all developing excellent communication skills very quickly. Some speak in proper sentences, which are well pronounced, after only a few weeks in the group.

The children use mathematical language in all their activities and are developing very good counting skills. They sort, compare and match, for example, with bears and table top games. The lotto game is adapted to meet the development needs of the children playing. They are

also able to build with construction toys, taking account of the way things fit together to ensure the structures are balanced and stable.

Work completed by the children is displayed on the walls, with very imaginative pictures and leaf paintings currently on show. The children help themselves to paint and crayons, make patterns and drawings, and use their artistic abilities to create different designs. During outside play and role play sessions inside, the children use their vivid imaginations to play their games. They go to the seaside, go to the café, pretend to be decorators using water and large brushes, and become fishermen when playing with the water tray and the marine models.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children behave very well, share, take turns and co-operate well when playing. They have clear guidelines within the positive encouraging environment, from the code of conduct for both children and adults when in the setting. Parents are made aware of the policy which is included in their brochure. Staff have a very good understanding and knowledge of the children. They know the triggers which may cause children to become angry or sad, and are able to pre-empt upset or poor behaviour. Through training courses staff have developed a good awareness of behaviour management, and through experience, the different cultural expectations parents may have.

During the sessions, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They are developing a good knowledge of right and wrong, and have a growing awareness of different cultures and religions. The children learn about their place in society and the local community through activities which include drawings and photographs of the city.

Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. The group has excellent relationships with them and encourages them to feel involved with the group. They help by joining the committee, attending sessions, providing resources, fund-raising and also are welcome to attend training courses. Information about the setting is made available to parents through the introductory brochure and also the policy and procedures file. Regular newsletters and notices keep them up to date with what is happening and provide topic information. Ideas for activities and songs to sing at home are included each month. Information about the Foundation Stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework is displayed on the wall for parents to see and included in the brochure.

When children first visit the group, parents complete an information form so staff know about them and their family. Contracts are also completed. To ensure the children's development needs can be met, a profile, produced by parents, gives staff a very good idea of the child's current abilities. Parents know they can telephone the group to ensure their children are settled if they are worried about them. Staff take photographs of the children during the first session to show parents what they have been doing.

The parents feel they are an important part of the group. They like to contribute ideas, such as the parent who provided a photograph of a horse chestnut tree, grown by the father of one

of the children from a conker planted 25 years ago. She provided pots for the children to grow their own trees from the conkers her child collected.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are welcome in the group, and although no children currently attend, systems are in place to ensure their needs can be met. The staff have plenty of experience and have undertaken training to meet the needs of different children. The premises are suitable, being only on the ground floor and resources are available to inform other children of problems their peers may have.

The group has an equal opportunities policy which covers parents, children and staff. Children are currently attending from several different ethnic groups and their individual needs are met, with staff taking great care to ensure they understand any cultural differences. Children celebrate different festivals and customs, with baking and dressing up, and music and dance used to widen their knowledge. Staff are learning simple words from the first languages children use to help them communicate. Notices are written in different languages to ensure parents are able to understand. An interpreter is also brought in if necessary. All the children are able to use the full range of resources, with no activities stereotyped.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. The well qualified established staff group works very effectively as a team, supporting each other, children and parents. They ensure paperwork and recording systems are in place and kept up to date, apart from fire drill recording. They provide a safe, well managed and efficient environment where children can learn and play. Robust systems are in place for staff employment, to ensure the people appointed are suitably qualified, experienced and cleared. The staff ratio is high to ensure good supervision and the needs of all the children can be met, with contingency arrangements in place for emergency cover.

The group has a very positive training ethos, where staff are encouraged to support their own personal development and further improve their practice. They also attend informal training sessions through local meetings and conferences, and make these available to parents who are interested. The group has good relationships with the local Early Years and Extended Schools Service. Contact visits are made to the local schools and the group is a member of the Fulford Early Years Partnership.

The certificate is on display and the conditions of registration are respected. Staff keep Ofsted informed of any changes or significant events. A complaints procedure is in place and made available to parents, with a record of concerns or complaints maintained. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the staff were asked to ensure all the confidential information they hold is kept securely. This has now been done, and records are locked away unless being used by staff or parents. They were also asked to record the arrival and departure times for each session.

The register has been adapted to include the times if children arrive late or go early, to ensure a correct record is available in the event of an emergency.

During the last inspection the staff were asked to increase children's access to number and counting. They have developed their use of posters, and also the daily use of number in general activities, such as counting chairs, number of children and the days of the week or month. The children also use dominoes and counting games to develop their skill.

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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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 outstanding.

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):

- maintain a record of fire drills consistently, which can be used by staff to monitor the procedure.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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