



Bream Early Learners

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY136954
Inspection date	28 November 2006
Inspector	Angela Cole
Setting Address	Bream C of E Primary School, The Beverley Casey Building, High Street, Bream, Lydney, Glos., GL15 6JW
Telephone number	01594 564535
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Registered person	Bream Early Learners
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 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?

Bream Early Learners is managed by a voluntary committee of parents and is a registered charity. It opened in 1965 and operates from a large room in a self-contained unit on the site of Bream Church of England Primary School. The group has access to the school hall, playground areas and garden. A maximum of 24 children may attend the setting at any one time. Sessions are from 09.00 until 11.30 each weekday and from 12.30 until 15.00 on Wednesday and Friday afternoons during school term times. During the summer term, another session is held for the rising three-year-olds and older children stay an extra hour on one day for lunch.

There are currently 45 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for early education. Children come from within the village or from the surrounding area. The staff have experience of supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The setting employs five members of staff to regularly work with the children. Four hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a qualification. The staff are supported by parents on rota duty and have links with the local school. The group is a member of the Gloucestershire Parent and Toddler Association and has achieved the Bristol Standards Quality Assurance Award. The setting uses the High/Scope educational approach.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children have good, varied opportunities for exercise and fresh air. They move around freely and gain effective control of their bodies, for example, as they respond to music. Children demonstrate increasing skill as they choose and use appropriate, small implements including paint brushes and woodworking tools. They gain effective self-care skills to become independent in toileting, dressing, eating and in using the group's resources.

The children are cared for in clean, warm premises and show good awareness of personal hygiene including hand washing. Staff use a range of effective procedures, such as wearing of gloves, so the risk of cross infection is minimised. Children who become ill are well cared for and the risk of catching an infection is minimised. This is because parents are aware of current childhood illnesses and the importance of keeping sick children at home. Children receive good continuity of care through the sharing of information with parents about accidents and medication.

Children help themselves to drinking water from their named bottles whenever they wish and understand the importance of taking regular drinks as a way to maintain their health. They gain an effective understanding of good nutrition as they select a snack from nourishing options such as fruit, vegetables and cereals. The group takes good account of parents' wishes to meet the children's dietary needs. Children are effectively encouraged to widen their tastes as they try different fruits such as melon. They enjoy preparing their food, for example, by growing cress and tasting it in a sandwich at the end of the week.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely in a secure and suitable environment. Staff carry out detailed, on-going risk assessment and supplement this with daily checks to make sure children are safe. Prior to an outing, staff visit the venue to assess and plan for any hazards. At the setting, the effective security systems ensure that uninvited visitors cannot enter the building and that children do not leave unsupervised. The children safely move around to choose their activities as the open layout of the L-shaped room and adjacent garden allows good supervision by the staff at all times.

The children choose from a wide range of toys and equipment in accessible storage. They play with high quality resources that include many items of natural materials. For example, the homecorner furniture has items such as metal keys and wooden cooking implements that are stored on recessed racks so children are safe. The children play with age-appropriate materials

that are regularly checked by staff. This is to make sure that small items, such as pegs and marbles, are not available to younger ones so they come to no harm.

Children effectively learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they practice how to leave the building in an emergency and know to cross the playground calmly, one behind the other. They hear reminders about not speaking and eating at the same time and discuss why they take turns on the obstacle course in the hall. During outside play, children learn to handle natural materials safely, such as small logs, and experience a controlled sense of danger as they balance on low tree trunks.

The staff safeguard and promote children's welfare and have all the required procedures in place. Most hold a current, first aid certificate and have recently completed a detailed course on protecting children. Staff are familiar with the child protection policy and procedures so they have a comprehensive understanding of child protection and are confident that they could handle any concerns effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children engage in a range of enjoyable and interesting activities. Staff observe each child closely and use their secure knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to support the development of the younger ones. The children are very confident in the flexible routine that effectively includes quiet times and provision for their care needs. Staff clearly explain what is going to happen next, including moving to the school hall. This heightens the children's sense of security so they respond well at changes of routine. At the beginning of their free play, children plan their first activities; many continue to record their choices of play area on a planning board to successfully foster their independent learning. Children are involved in a broad range of activities that successfully supports their language, mathematical thinking, imagination and creativity. They are highly interested in their chosen play, including extended role play and creating with a wide range of materials such as coloured rice and sparkly, purple dough. The children have excellent interaction with the attentive staff who skilfully respond to extend their current play and ideas. For example, when a child spots a toy dinosaur in the suspended display of coloured items, this leads to enthusiastic singing about such creatures. The children make good sense of the world as they enjoy walks in the woods and they learn to connect ideas to describe, for example, 'my raining wellies'.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all of the six areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy, most listen carefully and respond to instructions, for example, to join in action songs. Children have very good support to develop their speaking skills in one-to-one conversations with adults at activities and at group social times. They listen intently to stories and able children learn the meaning of new words such as 'sly' and 'fled'. Children enjoy creating and recognising a wide range of sounds, and willingly suggest words that complete rhymes, including 'toes' and 'nose'. They use writing materials from a young age and enjoy scribbling their own 'messages' and attempts at their names. The children make very good progress in relation to their starting

points in mathematical development. They use numbers in their conversation, for example, to say that 18 children are 'millions', and some count computer pictures to check their recognition of the numbers. They compare numbers in songs, and each day, as they place choosing cards on spots, they work out how many more children may come to that area. Children are well challenged and supported to calculate in routines, including how many children are left to wash their hands. They understand a wide range of mathematical words relating to physical position, such as 'under' and 'over', and focus on 'shorter' and 'longer' lengths of tape as they help to mend a book.

There are no differences in learning between girls and boys, for example, in their creative development. Children choose from the wide range of media set out for them to make their own creations. They explore the colours of objects, add colouring to water and mix their own paint colours to handprint 'autumn leaves'. They experience a wide range of textures, for example, in outdoor play with seeds, logs, sticks and peat. Children of all ages are fully involved in their role play in the highly-resourced, imaginative areas such as the 'greengrocer's shop'. Staff offer a high standard of support as children concentrate on creating their own stories. Children respond using all their senses when they feel the texture of different woods and explore the tastes and smells of fruit and vegetables. After talking and reading about colours, they see a rainbow at the end of a walk and excitedly use pens and paints to record their wonderful experience. Children frequently experiment with sounds and respond to music. They sing to greet and say good-bye to each other, and suggest song titles using objects from a 'song' bag. They experiment freely with the sounds of attractive instruments and spontaneously use these to accompany group songs.

All staff have, or are gaining, a good understanding of the Foundation Stage to support children's progress. They effectively plan the learning environment and resources to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across six areas of learning, including knowledge and understanding of the world. The playroom is set out in distinct zones that support children to explore, for example, the properties of bubbles and changes to ingredients for bird food. Staff most effectively plan the learning environment and activities to suit the needs of children, for example, as they learn to work together to design a road track for their play. Timed use of the computer supports children's learning in many areas, including reading, as a child knows, "That says 'on' and that says 'off'." Staff's planning is highly informed by suitable assessment that give a clear picture of children's progress to help move them to the next stage in their learning. Staff are increasingly making good use of children's own ideas to foster spontaneous activities and to plan future learning experiences. As children recall and review their day, staff note their particular interests and offer activities, such as reading a book about babies following the visit of a baby sister. Staff use highly effective methods so children are truly engaged and they challenge and support individuals to achieve as much as they can. For example, they use a spaceship built from large boxes to introduce stories and rhymes about space to help children extend their understanding of their environment. The adults make very good use of time so all children are included and have maximum opportunities to be involved and enjoy their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive good support to settle so most arrive eager to begin the session. They are well supported to show high levels of concentration and gain good self-esteem in the relaxed and happy atmosphere. They have excellent interaction with attentive staff who respond to their current play and skilfully extend their ideas. Adults comment on children's play and ask relevant questions that they are keen to answer. The children confidently make decisions through the High/Scope system of independent selection; they persevere at activities of their own choice and begin to co-operate to work together. Tasks, such as feeding the birds, teach them a sense of responsibility and care of living things. The children show a strong understanding of being part of different communities, such as their families and the group. They begin to appreciate their own and other cultures through celebrations such as Christmas and Eid, play with a wide range of resources and meeting a visitor from India. This helps the children to develop a positive attitude to others.

The staff have good regard to children's backgrounds so their individual requirements are effectively supported. Children with additional needs receive special focus from the designated member of staff and their keyworker. The setting liaises closely with their parents and all outside agencies who are involved, so the children receive a high level of support. In the group, children are well supported to behave. This is because staff are calm, clearly explain their expectations and make good use of praise. Children are supported by consistent, understood strategies so they willingly take turns, for example, at the computer. They helpfully share toys and materials with each other so the session proceeds smoothly and children feel comfortable. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from good consistency of support as parents' permissions are sought, for example, regarding their safe collection by known persons. Families are, overall, well informed about the setting and its Foundation Stage provision. The neat noticeboards and extensive welcome pack provide detailed information; staff make sure new parents feel they understand all the relevant aspects of their children's care. Informative newsletters include activities for the half-term and parents, sometimes, come into the playroom so they see what the children are doing that day. The children benefit from good, informal sharing of information about their care and progress in the Foundation Stage. Parents' comments about the children's out-of-setting achievements are listened to by staff though are not recorded to further support the children's learning. Families feel welcomed by the bright, well-organised environment with carefully-mounted displays of children's work. They have good opportunities to be meaningfully involved in the children's learning through management and day-to-day support. They share their skills in the group and explore the contents of play packs so the children continue their learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The group is well organised to make good use of the space available so that children's independence and development is successfully fostered. There are robust systems to appoint staff, and to support their continuing suitability through training and daily communication

between staff and management. Overall, staff are well qualified and experienced and they are most effectively deployed to support the children's welfare at all times. Children receive high levels of support from their keyworkers, and frequent use of small groups well supports their learning. The stimulating range and balance of resources and activities help children to make very good progress in all areas of their development. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

All legally required documents are well maintained, including the clear registers. Most of the group's policies have recently been revised by the committee and a few, such as policies for equal opportunities and parental involvement, remain to be detailed with the setting's good practice. The group has set up a log for any complains and the poster with the regulator's contact details is prominently displayed. The setting's documentation is neatly filed in secure, accessible storage and children's personal records are well maintained with good regard for confidentiality. Effective sharing of documentation with parents successfully supports the children's health, safety and well-being.

Leadership and management are good. The joint leadership is a strength of the setting and the committee provides informed, regular support. Senior staff continue to extend their professional development and encourage others through the delegation of responsibilities. They embrace new initiatives such as the 'Birth to three matters' and willingly act on good advice, for example, about record keeping. They appreciate the worth of self-evaluation and the process of gaining quality assurance to identify the group's strengths and areas for development. They closely monitor the children's progress and set clear direction to improve the organisation and outcomes for their care and learning. For example, staff are extending planning that is based on the children's interests and the setting is seeking advice to develop an outdoor classroom. Managers and leaders are highly motivated and committed to promoting an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous care inspection recommended that the setting improved procedures to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. These are now included in practical detail to support the protection and safety of the children.

In the previous education inspection, no significant weaknesses were noted and the group was asked to further consider the provision for children to develop their large muscle skills. The group has regular times in the hall each week when children move to music or negotiate large equipment that is sometimes set out as obstacle courses. They learn to control wheeled toys on the playground. Some equipment is available in the playroom such as a battery vacuum for pushing and pulling. Children now play in the garden as they climb and balance on logs and push each other around in the toy cars. The setting now provide good opportunities for children to foster all aspects of their physical development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 the 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 nursery education are good.

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):

- further develop some policies, including equal opportunities and parental involvement, to reflect the good practice in 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):

- extend the day-to-day information for families about the children's activities and ensure parents contribute their comments on the children's out-of-setting achievements to support their learning.

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