



Bar Hill Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY338501
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Inspector	Caroline Wright
Setting Address	The Village Hall, The Spinney, Bar Hill, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB3 8SU
Telephone number	01954 782 892
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Registered person	Bar Hill 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bar Hill Pre-school is run by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. The pre-school opened in the current premises in the Village Hall in a purpose-built area of the building. It is situated in Bar Hill close to Cambridge. A maximum of 25 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 15:00 on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday during term times only. In addition, a lunch club will be offered every day from 11:30 to 12:30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 16 children receive funding for early education. Children attending the pre-school come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The nursery employs eight members of staff: five of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications; two of the staff are working towards a relevant qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about personal hygiene through regular routines, such as washing their hands before eating, and they know that washing your hands 'stops you getting poorly'. Staff act as good role models, wiping down surfaces before preparing the snack bar and after children have eaten to help children to stay healthy. Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They are able to run around and exert themselves in the outdoor play area whenever they choose, so that they learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. They develop new physical skills such as running, pushing, pulling and climbing using the outdoor equipment. They understand how their bodies work and are aware of changes that occur in their bodies due to physical exertion: they talk about having a 'temperature' when they have a 'cold'; they comment 'I'm hot' when they have been running around outside.

Children are able to help themselves to a healthy snack from the snack bar when they are hungry and they learn about healthy eating during discussions with staff. They help to prepare fruit and pour their own drinks to enable them to develop new physical skills. The healthy eating policy encourages parents to provide healthy options for their children to eat in their packed lunches; children are able to help themselves to a drink of water when they want one. In addition, children learn about healthy eating through meaningful activities, such as making sandwiches for snack in the afternoon or visits to Tesco to watch bread being made.

The needs of children are well met by adults who have a good understanding of their developmental needs. Children are able to take a rest in the book corner when they want to so that they do not become over tired. If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the pre-school, up to date records are in place and staff have recent qualifications in first aid to make sure that good care is given.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around safely under the expert supervision of the pre-school staff. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, waiting for their turn to come down the slide so that they do not bump into each other. Adults help younger children to learn about safety, reminding them that they should 'be careful' when they use knives to cut up fruit for the snack bar. Children use a very good range of interesting resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development, and these are checked regularly by the pre-school staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe for children to use. Furthermore, staff provide interesting activities to help children to learn to keep themselves safe outside of the pre-school. For example, the road safety officer comes to visit the pre-school and staff follow up his visit during

play activities with resources such as traffic lights and zebra crossings in the outdoor role play area to consolidate children's learning.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a good understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A wide range of written policies and appropriate procedures are in place, including regular fire drills to help children know what to do in the case of an emergency evacuation of the premises. In addition, key workers greet each child individually each day and record the times of arrival; parents and carers are made aware of the risk of children following them out of the gate if they are not extremely vigilant as they leave the premises. This promotes children's ongoing safety and well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's experiences are enhanced by the skilful interaction of the qualified members of staff who use their knowledge and understanding of how children learn; they expertly use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to enhance the work they do with children under three-years-old. Children are encouraged to become independent and make decisions. They are extremely interested in the activities available and spend long periods of time concentrating and exploring self chosen activities and materials at their own pace. For example, they spend a long period of time exploring and manipulating shaving foam, examining the texture and drawing pictures in the foam and they thoroughly enjoy painting on the playground floor watching their pictures 'disappear' in the sunshine.

Children engage in story telling and role play together with adults. They talk on the phone to 'mummy' and put on hats and handbags to 'go shopping' or find some 'cat-food to feed my cat'. Adults enthusiastically respond and join in with their role play with smiles and encouraging comments, to urge them to communicate and become confident. Young children understand and confidently use the language of mathematics; for example, they ask for 'more' butter for their sandwiches or comment that the piece of banana they have is 'too big'. They eagerly experiment with paints, pencils, scissors and glue to make their own pictures and develop their creativity.

However, there are no regular opportunities for children develop their listening and communication skills by talking together at circle time or sharing a regular story time with adults.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children use their imagination in role play, exploring familiar situations such as filling up the car with 'petrol' at the 'garage' using watering cans to transport water from the outside tap. They show a clear understanding of time and place when they discuss how it is not possible to walk to Cambridge because, 'it's too far', adding that 'you can go on a bus and get there in ten

seconds!' Children enjoy singing songs while they play, moving their bodies to the rhythm and making up new words to 'twinkle twinkle little star'.

Children use number names their play and count groups of items reliably, such as pieces of banana or apple at snack time. They communicate effectively and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and talk about what they know. They use language well to respond to their sensory experiences, telling adults that the shaving foam feels, 'sticky...cold...nice' and that it 'smells like lemon ice-cream'. They talk with understanding about the natural environment when they tell adults that 'rainbows come when it's raining and sunshining together and little rain is called 'spitting''.

Staff provide children with interesting opportunities to use writing for a purpose and use numbers and calculations in everyday activities. Children write postcards and then take them to the post office for posting; they use pencils and paper in the role play cafe and they use number names as they press the buttons on the telephone and cash register. In addition, children are consistently encouraged to write their names on their artwork using their name cards to help them. However, some activities lack challenge for children: for example, staff do not always provide opportunities to encourage older or more able children to develop new skills or to enable children to extend their learning beyond the planned learning intentions. This affects learning.

All of the staff working with children have a very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are secure in their knowledge of how the activities will contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals. They plan a suitable range of activities over a period of time so that children access a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities. Key workers monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals and use the stepping stones to track development. However, they do not effectively use their observations of what children enjoy during the session to plan future activities. This impacts on their ability to offer appropriate challenge and to enable children to build on what they already know and can do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children show a very strong sense of belonging and high levels of self confidence as they eagerly greet key workers and each other upon arrival at the pre-school at the start of each session. They move around the indoor and outdoor environment freely and independently. They choose what activities and resources they want to access so that they can actively pursue their own interests and learn to make decisions. As a result, children are highly motivated and extremely engaged at all times. They spend extended periods of time at all of the activities, exploring resources and materials freely, consolidating their learning and previous experiences. This encourages positive behaviour and promotes children's independent 'lifelong' learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Adults working with the children act as excellent role models and sensitively encourage children to respect each other's needs and to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank you'. Key workers help children to learn what is expected of them by clearly explaining to children what they want them to do in

a way that they can understand and as a result, children's behaviour is exemplary. Children enthusiastically share experiences during informal discussions with their key workers and each other. They confidently talk with adults about their families and what they do at home to learn about each other's family culture. Children work together in harmony during meaningful, self chosen activities. They learn about the feelings and needs of others through discussions with their key workers about 'happy' or 'sad' faces. They discuss how they should 'share the sand' because 'that's very kind'. Children learn about the world they live in through interesting experiences: they look at books, use attractive resources that provide positive images of all members of society and sing songs in Spanish or French. In addition, they take part in a superb range of meaningful activities that reflect varied cultural and religious celebrations to help them develop positive attitudes towards diversity.

There is a very effective system in place to support children with learning difficulties or disability: staff are very experienced in helping children with difficulties to join in successfully with the activities they provide so that they can make good progress according to their individual learning needs. Furthermore, staff have developed a consistent strategy to help children who speak English as an additional language, to use their 'home language' to build on what they already know.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive early education is very good. Parents receive clear and detailed information about pre-school activities so that they can support their child's learning at home; the attractive notice board and management committee meetings ensure that they are well informed and have the opportunity to be fully involved in the decision making process in the pre-school. The highly effective key worker system enables parents to share information on a daily basis. Regular written reports, with key workers' observations of children's achievements, enables parents to be well informed about their children's progress so that children's individual needs are well met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

All areas of the pre-school environment are well organised, attractive and provide plenty of space for children to move around safely and independently. The management committee of the pre-school uses successful recruitment procedures, which ensure that the staff are very well experienced and hold the necessary qualifications to carry out their role effectively. All staff are rigorously vetted to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. The induction procedure and comprehensive operational plan, with up to date information for staff, makes sure that all members of the team are secure in their knowledge of procedures for child protection and maintaining children's overall welfare. The pre-school staff are well supported by regular meetings with their line manager, who ensures that their ongoing training needs are well met. A good system has been established to enable staff to take responsibility for sharing their skills and supporting their colleagues: curriculum co-ordinators and deputy managers assist in day-to-day supervision of staff. However, the procedures for ensuring that the risk assessment of the premises covers all potential hazards and for ensuring that the medication procedure supports children's health are not effective.

All of the legally required documents, which contribute to children's health, safety and well-being, including a procedure to record complaints or concerns, are in place and regularly reviewed.

Leadership and management of early education are good. Regular meetings enable staff to work effectively as a team. However, the system for monitoring the programme for early education does not successfully identify minor weaknesses in teaching or planning for children's next steps. This affects learning.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection/registration 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 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):

- improve the system for identifying hazards to children to ensure that potential risks in the kitchen are minimised and the medication record system ensures parents acknowledge that they have been informed when children are given medicine
- provide children with regular, planned opportunities to gather together for short periods of time to engage in discussions and listen to stories, so that they learn to enjoy stories and develop listening and communication skills (this also applies to nursery education).

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):

- improve the system for planning activities to ensure that children's assessment records and observations of what children do during the sessions are used to provide activities that build on children's existing skills and interests (this also applies to care)
- set up a system to monitor practice and the effectiveness of teaching: make sure that all activities offer appropriate challenge for all children and that they enable children to extend their learning beyond the planned learning intentions across all areas of development (this also applies to care).

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