



Bicknacre Preschool

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402122
Inspection date	09 March 2007
Inspector	Anita Bartram
Setting Address	c/o Priory School, Bicknacre Road, Bicknacre, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 4ES
Telephone number	01245 222286
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Registered person	Bicknacre Preschool
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?

Bicknacre Pre-School opened in 1977. It operates from two demountable classrooms on the site of Priory school in Bicknacre, Essex. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school operates during school term times. It is open each morning from 09.00 to 11.45 and for four afternoons from 13.00 to 15.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 46 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these 41 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come mainly from the local catchment area. The pre-school supports a small number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The group employs seven staff. Five of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are able to begin to develop healthy tastes in what they eat and drink. For example, they delight in eating fruit or noodles and enjoy spreading their own spreads on toast or pouring their own milk or water. Consequently, all children are very well nourished. Children are generally aware of why they need to wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet. Staff display useful posters in the bathroom to prompt children's awareness and keep the premises clean. Consequently, children are suitably protected from cross-infection.

Staff follow appropriate medication procedures and have ready useful guidance to refer to in an emergency. Children are very well settled in the group. Staff welcome children and parents into the group and offer sensitive reassurance or support for children who need extra help to leave their parent. Children value the warmth and friendliness of the 'Aunties' who work in the group and as a result, children are emotionally secure and content in the setting.

Children's physical skills are developing very well. For example, some three year olds can confidently throw and catch a large ball competently under the guidance of a member of staff. All children pedal and scoot ferociously around the playground during outdoor playtime, enjoying giving friends lifts on their trikes or stopping and starting at imaginary traffic lights. Children's finer physical skills are developing appropriately encouraging good hand-eye coordination. Children are developing very worthwhile personal skills. Many children can take themselves to the toilet without adult help, and most will 'have a try' at putting on their own coats and doing them up. Children are beginning to recognise the effects of exercise on their bodies. For example, they comment 'I'm very puffed out because I've done lots of running', and children remove their coats as they become warm from pedalling and scooting outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are safe and secure. Staff conduct daily written risk assessments before the children arrive and take active steps to minimise any hazards. The main exit door is monitored by a member of staff as children arrive and leave and is kept firmly secure once children are on the premises. As a result, children can play and learn in an environment free from any hazards. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere in the group as children arrive and make full use of available wall and ceiling space to display children's group and individual work. This helps children to see their work is valued and appreciated.

All toys and equipment are in plentiful supply and in good order. A wealth of boxed games and puzzles are available to the children to self-select, again encouraging their independence. Staff make good use of the second classroom to take children out in small groups to complete various activities. Whilst this benefits some children's skills in concentration and listening or provides support or extension to some children's learning, it limits the space staff have to offer the many valuable resources or activities they plan for the children. This has a restricting effect on the breadth of experiences on offer to the children.

Staff have a good appreciation of their roles and responsibilities with regard to child protection. The member of staff responsible has compiled further useful information to ensure she is equipped to deal with any concerns staff may have. All staff keep their training up-to-date and as a result, measures to safeguard children are firmly in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at pre-school. Many children particularly enjoy painting and playing with playdough and many enjoy riding the tricycles and scooters outside. Children are keen to come to the pre-school and achieve well.

Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and use this alongside discussions with parents to assess younger children's stages of development when they start in the pre-school. Staff use the information gathered to get to know each child's starting point and home circumstances. Staff do not yet fully use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan activities specifically suited to address the four aspects of under three's development. However, overall staff are able to appropriately meet children's individual care, learning and play needs.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff are skilled at asking children open-ended questions whilst they play, this is aimed at extending their awareness and understanding. Children are offered appropriate support or challenge during small group work which staff undertake with children. Staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage is secure. All staff have a core qualification in childcare and education although have not yet attended any specific Foundation Stage training. Staff are however keen to extend their practice and attend short courses throughout the year. Staff appreciate the importance of assessment and use information gained through observation to inform termly planning for each child. This means gaps in children's learning are suitably addressed and any developmental concerns can be quickly identified.

Staff delight in offering children different experiences and this provides children with a stimulating and fun environment in which to play and learn. For example, children are able to hold and feel an authentic boomerang as they make copies at the craft table, or join in the dragon dance as part of Chinese New Year celebrations. Staff plan large physical activities for the routine outdoor play time and as a result children's physical skills are developing very well. However, staff are not always making full use of the adjoining covered outdoor area or the second classroom to deliver all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This hampers the breadth and pace at which some children are able to experience, consolidate and extend their learning best suited to their learning style.

Staff management of children and their behaviour is very good. As a result of the staff's calm and consistent approach children are very good at regulating their own behaviour. They generally solve disputes verbally or by seeking help from an adult. Overall, children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children of various ages are able to concentrate quietly during small group times and listen appropriately during registration time. Children are

developing worthwhile independence skills in both learning and self-care. This is helping to prepare them well for the move to 'big school'.

Children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing well. Children delight in using books and are beginning to handle books appropriately, recognising key points from story lines and re-telling the story using their own words. Many children have a good awareness of letters, they offer the correct sounds for letters and many are able to write their name correctly on their work. Children's mathematical development is very good. They appropriately refer to shapes and size as they play and many children confidently use vocabulary correctly to represent position. For example, they firmly state they are in the front of the line and their friend should stay behind them. Children can recognise familiar numerals such as 3 and 4 and most can rote count towards 10. More able children's early literacy and mathematical awareness are not always sufficiently challenged. For example provision is sometimes limited for children to recognise or write familiar words for purpose or to help them to use numbers for purpose, such as recording how many children are present or in adding together everyday totals.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. They can talk about and compare distance, for example in how they travel to pre-school with travelling to Australia. They ask relevant questions as they handle the boomerang such as what the markings are. Children's skills in information and communication technology are very well developed. More able children confidently move the mouse, selecting different programs as younger children sit to observe and learn. Children enjoy construction although the provision to encourage them to select tools and assemble as part of early mark making is not always sufficiently available. Children's creative development is generally developing soundly. Children thoroughly enjoy painting and concentrate hard as they paint on the easel. Children enjoy the plentiful array of craft activities on offer on table tops. Displays of children's work around the room reinforce to children and parents that the children's work is valued and worthwhile. The range of other creative experiences such as role-play or core tactile experiences such as sand and water are limited due to space constraints. This restricts the children's opportunities to express themselves through role-play or to explore and learn through their different senses.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have strong working relationships with parents. For example, as each child starts, staff meet with parents to exchange valuable information from home, meaning that staff can quickly assess any considerations they may need to account for in settling children in. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in the group and to offer suggestions. This has a positive impact on the consistency of care offered to the children. Parents are provided with adequate information about how to make a complaint. Staff manage children's behaviour in a calm and consistent way. This creates a calm atmosphere in the setting where children can play and learn purposefully. Children need little reminding at routine times to follow rules such as washing their hands or lining up at the steps to come inside. They follow instructions from staff well, such as tidying away their bikes at the end of playtime. As a result, children are learning about responsible behaviour.

Staff work closely with parents and actively seek advice from relevant outside agencies about how to support children who may have more specific needs. Senior staff liaise closely with the adjoining primary school to enable a smooth transition for all the children but more specifically for those who have more complex needs. Consequently, children are fully supported and included in all the activities on offer. There is a good variation in resources and images to children reflecting diversity. Throughout the provision, staff aim to address each child's individual needs and give them equal opportunity to join in the activities. Whilst celebrating festivals such as Christmas or Chinese New Year children are able to explore different culture or traditions as they join in the Chinese Dragon dance or eat different foods such as pancakes or noodles as snack time. Consequently, children are able to build a balanced view of their wider world, so developing acceptance and tolerance of the differences and similarities between themselves and others.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting and are kept very well informed about their child's achievements and progress through the Foundation Stage. For example, key workers meet with parents termly to form play plans to identify areas of learning to accommodate each child's stage of development. Through these meetings any concerns can be dealt with or followed through by staff and parents are able to appreciate their child's achievements. Parents value the friendliness of the staff and feel comfortable to offer their help on either a regular or ad hoc basis. Consequently, the open and warm partnerships between key staff and parents has an encouraging and positive effect on children's experiences both within the group and at home.

Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The warm and friendly atmosphere in the group in which children play and learn is largely due to the effective team of staff. All staff have a core childcare qualification or are actively studying towards one. All staff continue to keep their skills and knowledge up to date through short courses or in-house training. This creates a vibrant environment for the children to develop as staff show commitment to continuous improvement.

Staff are organised in their daily work with the children. For example, all have roles to play in keeping the premises clean and safe, and have designated roles to focus on such as behaviour management, child protection or equal opportunities. This sound organisation actively contributes to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. The committee are aware of safe recruitment procedures and volunteers or visitors to the group do not have unsupervised access to children. This safeguards both children and adults.

All the required documentation is in place. Policies and procedures are generally detailed and comprehensive and are easily accessible to parents. This enables parents to gain a more detailed insight into the ethos of the group and its operation.

The leadership and management of the pre-school is good. The manager provides strong leadership and the committee are suitably aware of their roles and responsibilities. The committee and staff informally discuss longer term plans for the pre-school although no formal development plan is yet in place to focus on the development of the overall provision. The manager and staff openly assess and discuss any areas for improvement, such as the short term activity planning and take active steps to address weaknesses. This has a positive effect on the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection, the provider agreed to review hand washing procedures to help prevent the spread of infection and to ensure that the member of staff with responsibility for child protection attends a training course to update knowledge. Children are now able to use anti-bacterial soap and paper towels in the bathroom area and are aware of the reasons why they must wash their hands. As a result, children are now appropriately protected from cross-infection. The designated member of staff for child protection has attended training within the last year and all staff keep their training up-to-date. As a result, staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding children.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection, there were no key issues for action. The provider agreed to consider developing the detail and use of observations to evaluate activities and to focus on specific learning intentions to enable staff to more effectively target future planning. Key workers use the information gained through regular observations and assessment to informally incorporate support or challenge to children during activities. Consequently, overall most children are given sufficient support or extension to their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004, Ofsted received one complaint relating to National Standard 10: Special needs and to National Standard 12: Working in partnership with parents and carers. Ofsted conducted a visit to the provision on 8 July 2005. Ofsted found there to be appropriate procedures in place regarding the identification of children with special needs and for discussing children's welfare and development. The provider was given an action under National Standard 14: Documentation, to ensure that Ofsted is notified of any changes to the provision within 14 days. A satisfactory response to the action has been received and 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.

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 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):

- increase the use of the second classroom to develop the breadth of experiences on offer to the children daily

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):

- develop the use of the outdoor area to enhance children's experiences of all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum
- develop the provision for children to record number, and to select tools and techniques to assemble and join materials as part of independent early writing opportunities.

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