

Bright Sparks

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY275240
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Andrews Lane Primary School, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, EN7 6LB
Telephone number	01992 623065
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Registered person	Bright Sparks
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?

Bright Sparks pre-school opened in 2004 and operates from the nursery classroom in Andrews Lane Primary School in Cheshunt. The pre-school is open on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 13:00 until 15:30 during term time.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 20 children on roll and, of these, 17 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs three staff, all of whom hold relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because there are good medical procedures in place. All necessary permissions are requested and medical records are maintained appropriately. Children are protected from infection as the pre-school excludes any who have an infectious illness. They are well taken care of in the event of an accident because staff are suitably qualified in first aid. Staff are attentive to matters of hygiene and ensure that children play and eat in a clean environment. There are good nappy changing facilities available. Children learn to be hygienic through being encouraged to use tissues independently and wash hands when necessary. These procedures contribute effectively to keeping children healthy.

Children have an increasing awareness of healthy eating. They choose from a selection of fruit at snack times and a plain biscuit. In cooking activities they make a variety of foods, including healthy snacks such as sandwiches and cheese straws. Children with special diets have their needs met appropriately as all staff are made aware of these needs. Children may ask for a drink during the session although drinking water is not readily available for them to access independently. Therefore, there is a risk children may become dehydrated during play. Children enjoy good opportunities for physical activity. They have access to an outdoor play area which is particularly well resourced and offers a large space for children to move around and enjoy. They develop self confidence and physical skills as they travel, balance and ride on toy vehicles. Therefore, children keep fit and healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment. They have use of the school's nursery which provides plenty of play space and is made attractive through colourful displays of artwork. Children have good access to a wide range of resources both indoors and outdoors. Staff promote children's safety and security effectively through minimising risks in the environment. For instance, the storage cupboard is always kept shut and cleaning materials are stored out of reach of children. Regular risk assessments and safety checks are carried out. All outer doors and gates are locked while children are on the premises and staff ensure that children leave safely at the end of the session.

Children use suitable and safe resources and equipment. These are checked regularly for safety and are suitable for all children of pre-school age. Children learn to keep themselves safe as they are reminded about safety rules during play. They learn about road safety in role play situations to help them keep safe when out and about. There are good fire precautions in place and children practise an evacuation plan so that they know what to do in an emergency. Children are always well supervised. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues. They have the necessary contacts and information to seek advice if they have a concern. Therefore, children are well protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are well settled and play happily. They are keen to explore the available resources when they arrive and particularly enjoy role play in the home corner. They like to dress up and

play imaginatively with kitchen utensils and play food. They benefit from the support of staff, who enhance children's play through their involvement. Children are gaining in confidence and independence. They chat readily with staff and concentrate well on self chosen tasks, for example, threading and drawing. They have good opportunities to use their senses as they explore sand, water and play dough. They respond positively to staff who show an interest in them, for example, joining a group sharing books in the reading corner.

Staff make good use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework in planning activities for young children. In this way children are supported in developing communication skills and learning to be creative and imaginative. For example, children learn the names of different fish in conversation with adults. They play with toy fish and make pictures of fish using different materials. They enjoy mark making and have an increasing awareness of numbers through using a number line. They enjoy much praise for their efforts and achievements and this helps to develop their self-esteem. A 'show and tell' session each day also helps in boosting self confidence and developing use of language. Overall children learn effectively through staff's engagement and involvement in their play.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff plan the educational programme around various themes, showing a good balance across the six learning areas. The termly plans make use of the stepping stones of learning to show what children are expected to learn from the weekly activities and this works well in practice. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. They have a good attitude towards learning. They persist at tasks, show interest in new activities and concentrate well.

Children are developing their use of language in conversation with staff. They enjoy listening to stories and are keen to answer questions about the story. In this way they are helped to develop an enjoyment of books. They learn about the sounds and shapes of letters of the alphabet, and to recognise and write their own names. They like to explore mark making in free choice colouring and drawing. They are encouraged to develop early writing skills through tracing and copying. Children are becoming increasingly aware of numbers and count confidently in different situations, for example, deciding how many legs to stick on a jelly fish. They learn to compare size and shape in creative activities. In water and sand play they find out about quantity and capacity. They are beginning to calculate when using their fingers to participate in number rhymes, taking away and adding one at a time.

Children discover aspects of living things and the natural environment through a selection of topics such as growing plants, cooking and exploring materials. They look closely at cress and sunflower seeds before learning about what seeds need to grow. They enjoy the opportunity to observe land snails and find out what animals need to survive. When making cheese straws, children discover what happens to ingredients when mixed and how they change after baking. They are encouraged to use their senses in various activities and have fun being creative using paints and collage materials. For example, they make colourful fish for an underwater display. Children develop body awareness and learn to negotiate space as they move around obstacles in physical activities. They are able to practise climbing and jumping on outdoor apparatus and thereby increase their physical skills.

Staff explain clearly to children what is on offer each day and encourage them to take part. They promote children's learning effectively through asking questions and interacting in their play. When working with children they take opportunities to extend their learning through

suggesting ideas and encouraging children to think further. They make observations of children during play and activities and collect these alongside examples of children's work. These files are well maintained with many records of children's involvement and achievement. However, it is difficult to gauge children's progress at a glance against the stepping stones of learning. This means the records can not always be used effectively to guide future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and included in the setting because their individual needs are met well by staff. There are good procedures in place for settling in new children. If children feel upset, they are gradually calmed down and encouraged to join in activities. Staff ensure that all children are given equal opportunities and are happy. Children develop a sense of belonging. They register themselves when they arrive and enjoy the freedom to make choices during the session. They like the opportunity to sit in small groups at snack time and talk with a member of staff. They are becoming aware of other's needs and help to tidy away after snack. In this way they are learning to make a positive contribution.

Staff offer good support to children with learning difficulties and disabilities. They provide extra adult support if necessary and help children progress through devising individual educational plans. Children learn about diversity through using various resources which reflect diversity in society. They also participate in activities based around festivals and celebrations, for example, Chinese New Year and Divali. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported in their learning in various ways. For example, staff use picture cards to help children understand more easily and make use of simple sentences in conversation.

Children have good relationships with each other and generally play harmoniously. They respond well to a given signal when staff require their attention. They follow instructions and move around the setting in an orderly fashion. They learn to share and take turns, for example, when using the computer. Staff help them to negotiate if there is a dispute over resources. Therefore, children have an increasing awareness of how to behave responsibly. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The pre-school works closely with parents and carers. New parents enjoy an initial visit and receive information about the procedures and policies of the pre-school. Staff have good relationships with parents and carers and are available to talk with them at the beginning and end of each session. Parents happily contribute foods for snack time. They are kept up to date with events through regular newsletters. This helps them to feel involved and their children benefit from a close partnership.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. Parents are given information about the current themes and weekly activities. They meet with staff at open afternoons to exchange information about their children's progress. There is an interesting display showing how young children learn within the 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, there is little information for parents about the Foundation Stage of learning to help them become more involved in their children's activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school's policies and procedures work well in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All the necessary policies are in place and documentation relating to the setting is readily available. Information about children is kept in a secure place. The planning for the educational programme is kept up to date and on display. Staff make attractive photograph albums which provide a good visual record of children's time in pre-school. Overall their documentation provides a good framework for the pre-school's practice.

Staff are committed to continually improving their practice. There are good employment and induction procedures in place. An appraisal system has been introduced in order to monitor staff's professional development. Since the previous inspection staff have attended training in various areas, for example, Special Needs, Behaviour Management, Speech and Language. They have begun training in the new Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are therefore able to benefit from their acquired knowledge and skills.

Staff follow a daily routine closely so that children have opportunities to participate in free play and in organised activities. Snack times and story times are well organised so as to enable children to benefit from a learning experience. The organisation at the beginning of each session works well. Children do not get involved in messy activities until a member of staff is there to support. Children have good access to resources which are arranged at low level all around the room. Staff work directly with children at all times. Their organisation contributes to children staying healthy, safe and happy in their care. Overall children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader meets with staff to plan the educational programme and monitor the provision. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and works closely with staff towards ongoing improvement. Recently there have been changes to the organisation of story groups, and rhyme times, and this has been of benefit to children. Staff work well together as a team and are aware of their responsibilities. The leadership is effective in helping to promote a stimulating learning environment for all children.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure that children's hours of attendance are recorded. The attendance register is well maintained and includes times of arrival and departure if differing from sessional times. Therefore, staff have a clear record of when children are on the premises.

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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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):

- ensure that drinking water is available to children at all times.

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 assessment system in order to show clearly children's progress towards the early learning goals
- extend the information available to parents and carers about the Foundation Stage of 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