

Bancroft Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 141812 |
| Inspection date | 11 June 2007 |
| Inspector | Sylvia June Crawford |

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| Setting Address | Small Meeting Place, 29 Hadrians Drive, Bancroft, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK13 0PZ |
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| Telephone number | 01908 322502 |
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E-mail

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| Registered person | Bancroft Pre-school |
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| Type of inspection | Integrated |
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| Type of care | Sessional care |
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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bancroft Pre-School opened in 1985. It operates from a hall at the local community meeting place in Bancroft Milton Keynes.

There are currently 54 children aged from two to under five years on roll. This includes 30 funded three-year-olds and four funded four-year-olds. The group supports children who speak English as an additional language. The group is experienced at supporting children with special needs but there are no children with special needs on roll at present.

The group opens weekday mornings during term times on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 09.15 and 11.45 and on Wednesday they open between 09.30 and 11.30. The group open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 12.15 and 14.45 and on Wednesday between 12.00 and 14.45.

Four staff work with the children. Three staff have early years qualifications. One staff is on a training programme. The setting receives support from the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have the opportunity to develop their physical skills as they play on equipment both inside and outside the setting. Weather permitting, they go outside during each session and have a wide choice of resources. They enjoy riding on bikes, on sit and ride toys, chalking, water play and playing with a football. They benefit from the planned activities which enable them to develop skills in climbing, balancing, catching and steering.

The provision safeguards and promotes children's welfare through the staff's knowledge and experience in first aid, sick child procedures, the administration of medication and recording practice. For example, children do not attend if they have a contagious illness. Children are beginning to understand simple good health and hygiene practices; they wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Older children know they are washing their hands because of 'germs' and follow these routines without being reminded. However, in the play room and in the toilets children share a towel and this means there is the possibility of cross infection.

Staff ensure they have relevant information from parents so they can meet the individual dietary needs of each child. Children benefit from a variety of fresh fruits each day at snack time and receive regular fluids during the session to ensure they are not thirsty. Children enjoy a social occasion while they eat and are well supported and supervised by staff who encourage them to have good manners. However, staff do not provide children with plates or bowls for their snacks and consequently children are at risk from cross infection and are not learning what is socially acceptable.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children enter happily and confidently into a welcoming environment where they settle easily and play in a relaxed atmosphere. The premises are light, airy and well decorated and children's artwork is on display which contributes to their sense of achievement. Children use the areas available to them with confidence and are able to select from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment. Resources are suitable and sufficient for the age and the developmental stage of children in the playgroup. Staff check the resources and equipment regularly to ensure that they remain safe and are stored appropriately.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised wherever possible through the staff being consistently vigilant during the children's inside and outside play. Risk assessments are carried out to reduce potential hazards and daily checks are made to ensure the premises remain safe. Staff ensure all exits are secure and remind children regularly about how to play safely. For example, they have a large notice on the climbing frame demonstrating through pictures the right and wrong way to use it. Children practise fire drills and have a good understanding of what to do in an emergency. However, these are not always recorded consistently.

Staff safeguard and promote children's welfare well through their sound understanding and knowledge of child protection issues and the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. Parents are aware of the role and responsibility of staff with regard to child protection through the written policy in the prospectus.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Staff have a high regard for the wellbeing of all children, giving good levels of individual support, care and concern. Consequently, children form good relationships with the adults and other children within the group and play happily together. Staff are skilled at settling in new children and reassuring parents. They demonstrate a very caring and nurturing approach with all children which contributes to their sense of belonging.

Children are beginning to be aware of the pre-school routine, for example, children line up to go outside and tidy up when asked. However, staff do not always support children to be independent, for example, pouring their own drinks at snack time. All children enjoy singing and action songs; this gives them confidence and supports their learning. They particularly like songs that involve them stamping and shouting loudly. Children sit quietly when appropriate and listen to stories with enjoyment. Children are learning to distinguish between right and wrong and are taking turns and sharing. Staff use every opportunity to extend children's language and consequently children's communication skills improve. Older children have close relationships with others and confidently interact with staff sharing what they have been doing outside of preschool.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have satisfactory knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. There is a good balance of adult led and free play activities with a focused activity which has clear learning aims. Staff make regular observations of the children and these are recorded to show children's achievements. However, there is not a clear system in place to plan, assess, monitor and evaluate nursery education to ensure the developmental needs of all children in all areas of learning are being met.

Children show a sense of belonging as they greet each other and the staff on arrival. Children are developing a sense of time and place as they talk about the day of the week, the season and the weather. They are beginning to recognise the shape and sound of letters, for example, on Monday staff support children to write the letter M in the air with their fingers. There are lots of opportunities during the routine for children to recognise their own names such as when they are finding their place for lunch. Children are good listeners and communicators. They are confident to speak and sing in a large group, they talk about their own lives and experiences with each other and staff. Children enjoy looking at books and handle them with care; they share them individually with staff and together in small groups. They participate enthusiastically at story time, for example, asking questions and sharing their knowledge about different fish and animals that live under the sea.

Children have free access to all the resources and activities. They share their learning experiences with others, for example, a group of children work together as they build with the construction set. They talk about what they want to do and develop their own ideas. They discuss what they are making and how tall they will build their tower. Staff support them to build it as tall as they can. Children make marks independently using mark-making implements, such as crayons and felt tip pens. However, there are few opportunities for children to begin to make marks in everyday activities such as the home corner. Staff support children to practise their counting skills and to recognise and name numbers. They count at circle time and as they line up to go outside as well as during activities. Children can name and recognise basic shapes and are using

mathematical language appropriately. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to develop and practise their understanding of calculation.

Children enjoy creative play and take part in a range of activities to stimulate their imagination. They enjoy role play in the home corner where they pretend to be shopkeepers, vets or travel agents. They are able to practise self care skills as they use the dressing up clothes in their role-play activities. The children enjoy craft work and messy play and through this they are able to experience differing materials and textures. For example, making animal masks with fur fabric, play dough, painting and sand. Children participate in a variety of cultural celebrations and learn about cultural and religious differences, such as, Chinese New Year and Christmas. They learn about the natural world through regular nature walks and the planting and growing of flowers. Children are gaining good hand-eye co-ordination through the use of tools and smaller pieces of equipment, for example, glue sticks and jigsaws. Planned activities mean that children have regular everyday opportunities for physical play both inside and outside. They are able to use a range of small and large equipment to aid their physical skills and learn about how their bodies keep healthy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a high regard for the wellbeing of all children, giving good levels of individual support, care and concern. Consequently, children form good relationships with the adults and other children within the group and generally play happily together. Staff manage any disagreements in a sensitive way and consequently this helps children to understand about right and wrong and to learn to take turns and share. All children are included in activities and treated with equal respect by staff. The group have good procedures in place and well trained staff to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although none currently attend. Children with English as an additional language are learning to communicate well. Overall children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The group have some simple rules in place that are on display at child height to remind children of what is expected of them. Staff are good role models and use praise, encouragement to promote good behaviour. The group have a good range of resources that reflect cultural diversity and they celebrate other festivals; consequently children are beginning to understand the wider world and develop a positive image of themselves and others.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff have a good relationship with parents who are made very welcome in the setting. Parents find staff approachable and supportive. They receive a variety of written information relating to the care of the children, for example, through newsletters, the prospectus and the parents' notice board. Staff inform parents each day of their child's achievements. This helps staff and parents work together to meet children's individual needs. However, there are not sufficient opportunities for parents to find out about their child's developmental progress and understand about the Foundation Stage.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre-school environment is warm and welcoming, safe and secure for children. Staff organise the premises well to promote an environment where children are able to participate in a wide range of age appropriate activities. Children are engaged in purposeful activities that are appropriate to their stage of development and are able to build their confidence and self esteem.

The recruitment and vetting procedure ensures children are well protected and are cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. The induction procedure is good and ensures staff are clear about their roles in the setting and are able to act in the interest of children's welfare and safety. Sufficient staff who are qualified in childcare work directly with the children.

Most required documentation and parental permissions are in place. This is updated regularly and held securely to maintain confidentiality. There are written policies and procedures in place which the group are currently updating and these are available for parents. However, the group do not make it clear to parents how to make a complaint to Ofsted and are not recording fire drills consistently.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The setting has started to assess its strengths and weaknesses and have identified some areas where improvements can be made, for example consistent records of children's achievements. Staff are deployed well and actively involve themselves in children's learning and development. They work well as a team and have regular staff meetings to ensure consistency. Staff have annual appraisals at which training needs are identified and planned. The manager has a very good understanding of her role and responsibility and supports staff both professionally and personally. However, there is currently no clear system in place to identify the areas of learning being promoted through activities and to evaluate the nursery education overall. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the provider was asked to develop the child protection procedure to deal with an allegation of abuse against staff, to ensure that there is a written procedure for dealing with medication in the pre-school and that there is a written statement in place to be followed if a parent fails to collect a child.

Since the last inspection the group have amended and updated their policies and procedures to include the required information for child protection, the administration of medication and the non collection of children.

At the last nursery inspection the group were asked to ensure that plans identify the area of learning covered by each activity and to ensure the evaluations record whether learning objectives have been met.

The provider has made some improvements to progress the nursery education and is beginning to use comprehensive records of children's development. However, the provider's evaluation of the educational provision is not fully effective. Although children participate in a balanced programme of activities, the plans do not indicate which area of learning is being covered. Activities are not always properly evaluated to ensure that they meet the learning objectives for the children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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 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 satisfactory.

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):

- develop the opportunities for children to be more independent
- ensure that separate towels are used to prevent cross infection and that children's snacks are served in a hygienic and socially acceptable manner
- review and update complaints procedures so that they meet the latest changes to the National Standards and ensure that fire drills are recorded consistently.

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 more rigorous systems for planning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation of nursery education to ensure the developmental needs of all children in all areas of learning are being met
- provide more opportunities for children to practise mark making and writing for a purpose during everyday activities and extend opportunities for children to develop their skills in calculation
- provide more opportunities to meet with parents to discuss the Foundation Stage and how their children are learning and developing.

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