

Barlow Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206717
Inspection date	11 September 2007
Inspector	Yvonne Layton
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Registered person	Barlow Pre - School
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?

Barlow Pre-School opened in 1974. It operates from the village hall, using two rooms as play rooms and also the kitchen and toilets. The adjacent public park and grassed area are used for outdoor play as well as the local school's outdoor adventure area. A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group opens each weekday during school term time. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00 each morning and, additionally, in the spring and summer terms, every Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30 until 15:00.

There are currently 34 children aged from two and a half to five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local rural area. The pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy and thrive because the staff follow effective procedures and practices which meet children's, nutritional, physical and health needs. The good adult support and guidance helps children gain a sound understanding of hygiene and a real desire to become increasingly independent. The children are well used to the established routine of washing their hands prior to and after snack and activities. They easily access hand washing equipment in the toilets and in the main hall. Paper towels and soap dispensers ensure there are no issues regarding cross-infection. Children learn about good hygiene through staff consistent reminders and themes. Health issues are included in the planning of focussed activities. For example, planning for a nature theme about worms highlighted hygiene concerns where both the adult role to maintain good routines, how hygiene was to be promoted and what children can learn were included. Within the written pre-school rules children are reminded about maintaining good hygiene. They are clear about why they need to wash their hands. For example, during circle time, a child was still in the toilet and an adult stated they were probably washing their hands. A three-year-old child said 'stops germs making you poorly'. Staff are consistent in hygiene procedures. These include, spraying surfaces with anti-bacterial spray. There are established routines for the cleaning of toys, equipment and resources.

The needs of children are met effectively if they have an accident, require medication or are sick. Staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and first aid boxes are readily accessible. Accident and medication recording is suitably maintained and shared with parents. However, children's health is potentially compromised as written parental permission to seek any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment is not in place.

Balanced and nutritious snacks ensure children are well nourished. All snacks are recorded on a menu for parents to see. Individual health and dietary needs are recorded. Children learn about healthy eating and living through a broad range of planned themes and by spontaneous discussion with staff. Themes include, 'All about me' where children learn about caring for themselves and their bodies. Children enjoy a free choice snack-time where they independently select and serve themselves thus increasing independence.

Children explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating daily indoor and outdoor experiences. They learn about themselves and their bodies through planned themes and activities. Children are able to undertake physical challenges as they are involved in the focussed activities, such as, 'parachute play' and as part of the weekly rhyme theme of 'Jack and Jill' children experiment with balance and co-ordination by aiming bean bags into a bucket. Children are able to run freely during visits to the playing field and on local outings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a welcoming and well-maintained environment. They have access to a substantial range of resources, toys and equipment that meet their developmental needs very well. The staff monitor play materials, equipment and resources to ensure they are safe and clean for the children to use.

The pre-school has safety equipment, such as, door protectors and thumb-locks, and detailed procedures in place, which are shared with the parents, to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. Children are cared for in a setting where risks are identified and minimised and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure they are cared for in a secure environment. They are protected by the effective security of the premises. Detailed safety policies include a risk assessment policy and written risk assessments are completed for outings. Fire safety equipment and evacuation procedures are in place. Regular fire drills are practised. However, there is potentially an impact on children's safety as although visual risk assessments are undertaken on a day-to-day basis there are no written records in place and fire evacuation practices are not evaluated.

Children are actively learning about personal safety by staff's consistent expectation and reminders. For example, the pre-school rules include, 'if you run you might hurt yourself or somebody' and 'don't throw sand in your eyes or it might hurt'. The children easily recall the rules and remind each other to follow them. Themes are undertaken to enhance children's awareness. For example, the road safety officer visited as part of a personal safety theme.

Children's welfare is fully protected as the staff have strong knowledge and clear understanding of their role and responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures. The procedures relating to the child protection policies and procedures are made available for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All of the children are very settled in the pre-school and have a friendly relationship with the staff. They are confident and keen to access the varied range of play activities. The children develop strong socialisation skills as they look out for each other, support and assist each other. Staff are enthusiastic and activities are undertaken with a sense of fun. Children are encouraged to experience activities that stimulate the senses and encourage them to investigate. The mix of focussed planned activities, for example, circle time, outside play, topics and free choice play ensures children develop independence as well as becoming used to routines and working together. During circle time the children readily join in, are able to recall previous experiences and relate personal stories.

Children become independent as they choose to access the activities themselves. Staff promote learning well through supporting children when required and their expert practice of knowing when to stand back and let them develop their own ideas, such as, with creative and role play. Children's developmental progress is noted by observations throughout the session both using focussed activities and spontaneous play. All children are well stimulated and appropriately challenged by staff that encourage them to think and work things out for themselves. They are appropriately encouraged to participate in activities and are treated with warmth and caring.

Staff verbally share information regarding the child with parents or carers each session. Parents are aware they can see the written records at any time and there are opportunities for them to share ongoing developmental progress made at home.

Children aged under three are fully integrated with the older children. There is good consideration of their needs and activities are well adapted. Planning of activities and a detailed assessment record is maintained relating to 'Birth to three matters'. This assists staff to promote individual learning.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make strong progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. They ensure that all areas of learning are covered within activities and over a period of time. Staff demonstrate they know which aspect of learning the activities are related to and record children's achievements on an ongoing basis. Detailed, workable planning is in place, with clear identification of the aim and purpose of the activity and how each child's learning can be developed and progressed. There are links between each area of learning. All this ensures the children are very purposefully occupied.

Children are challenged by staff that use open-ended questions to develop potential effectively during activities. Children readily question and challenge, for example, when a staff member asked 'how do we make a number 10?', meaning the number's construction, a three-year-old confidentially states 'with paper and pens'. This demonstrates children have a positive approach to new experiences and can use thought processes as they explore, investigate and reason.

Children are well behaved and eager to try new experiences. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas for play or relating experiences. They relate well to their peers, staff and visitors, demonstrating confident personalities.

Children are developing good recall as they listen to rhymes and stories. They respond eagerly to staff questions regarding the rhyme and colour of the week. Children have access to a range of mark-making resources, including, etch-a sketches and a free choice mark-making table. However, children's experience is not fully enhanced as resources on the mark-making table are limited. Children form recognisable letters, some can write their name competently. All children are actively encouraged to mark-make by access to varied activities, such as, mark-making in sand. They learn new words due to the consistent staff interaction as they play and discuss during planned and spontaneous activities.

Children are developing a love of books as they have opportunity to enjoy them both individually and within a group. There is a comfortable story corner where they readily sit alone or in small groups. The setting has a good range of books, including, reference books and family life books.

Children develop their learning and experiences about written word in progressive stages. At the start of the year the setting adopts a rhyme of the week. This is eagerly recalled by the children. Activities are planned to relate to the rhyme. The related focussed activities for the rhyme 'Jack and Jill', included, building a hill, including safety aspects, acting out the rhyme and investigating sequencing.

Children have a sound understanding of mathematics. The environment is number rich. They spontaneously use their knowledge effectively during play. Themes are undertaken which include the development of children's mathematical skills. For example, the children undertook a traffic survey where the staff supported them to learn about calculation.

Children are developing an awareness of the needs of others, for example, they learn about weighing, feeding and caring for 'babies' when the imaginative area is turned into a baby clinic. The needs of creatures of the natural world are beginning to be understood as children enjoy the varied topics presented by staff and visitors, such as, investigating worms, including, caring for the worms, and a visit from 'Zoo Lab' involving a variety of creatures. In relation to the spring topic a local farmer brought in a lamb and the children visited the farm.

Children readily explore and extend their technology skills as they have access to a range of resources including; magnifying glasses, microphones, clocks and magnets. Themed activities such as learning about and how to operate a microwave oven and designing and flying kites enhance their learning and enjoyment. Children are developing their skills using the computer both independently and supported by staff.

Children have extensive opportunity to learn about their local area, family life and what celebrations occur in other cultures. They are involved in village life, including, the annual carnival and fundraising. Focussed activities such as exploring local buildings and features encourage a feeling of belonging to the local community. They learn about other cultures with activities and celebrations, including, flags of the world, trying and making cultural dishes and celebrating festivals.

Children's physical development is promoted through a balanced programme of activities and topics. They learn about themselves through a varied range of themes. Their fine manipulative skills are significantly enhanced through the use of a range of small resources through focussed and free-play activities, such as, using chopsticks to pick up spaghetti and pumping up tyres and balls. Outdoor play, outings and visits to the playing field provides opportunities to run freely, balance, pedal wheeled toys, catch and throw and kick balls. All of which children enthusiastically engage in. They are fully supported by staff to develop their potential.

Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their creative experiences as they have access to a range of craft, role play and activities on a free choice and planned basis. Children have access to a wide variety of art and craft activities both by free-choice, including, painting and chalking and themed activities. Themed activities include, soap flakes to make snow and celebration cards and items. Children explore texture and consistency using media, such as mud and foil. Natural items, such as examining a large fish and crab enhance their experience. Whilst adults are there to support them free expression is positively encouraged. Children readily make their own decisions regarding the design and the content of their work. For example, children enjoyed making large boxes into a space rocket and a boat. A wide range of play themes encourage children's imagination, such as, an ice-cream parlour and beach and an optician constructed in the imaginative play area.

Musical opportunities are varied and wide ranging. This includes musical instruments and daily singing and rhyme sessions. Children have opportunities to experience a variety of music, including, African music and different types of music to match a theme or occasion. A variety of music is used to alert the children to tidy away time. Children enjoy action rhymes and drama sessions, such as acting out stories and singing on the stage.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are respected and their ideas and choices are valued. For example, at the start of placement the setting accepts one new child a day and the child's key worker supports and monitors them closely to ensure they are happy and settled. There is a designated worker who takes responsibility for all aspects relating to children aged under three years. Each child's key worker is clearly identified for both children and parents and there is clear information relating to their role and responsibility. The effective key worker system promotes children's well-being and parents' confidence.

Equipment and resources meet the needs of individual children and there is a wide variety of resources that reflect diversity. Children's awareness of the wider world is well enhanced by themed activities, including craft and imaginative, and celebration of international festivals and festivals from other faiths. Activities are planned to recognise the different development and age of the children attending and support them to develop their potential. All children have access to activities. Detailed documents produced by the setting, including, information about the child prior to starting the placement from parents, ensures a profile of the child is provided to assist in meeting their needs.

The needs of children who have learning disabilities or difficulties are recognised and met sensitively. There is a concise policy which details how the service will be provided to children. They are fully included in the life of the setting through discussing their needs with parents and good liaison with related agencies.

Children develop a strong sense of independence and self-worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns and follow 'the pre-school rules' as they progress through the developmental stages. Children are actively involved in devising the rules. They are focussed on positive behaviour management and give clear consequences of actions, such as, 'say please instead of snatching', 'standing on the toys might break them' and 'put toys back in the box gently or they might break'. Children respond and readily recall the rules to each other naturally and consistently. They are happy and confident in the setting. They demonstrate caring and good consideration for each other. They greet each other warmly and actively assist each other with activities. The use of praise, encouragement and positive reinforcement contributes effectively to the children developing good social skills and a sense of belonging to a wider family group.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. All parents and carers receive varied verbal and written information about the services provided and how their child will be cared for, including a detailed 'welcome pack'. This includes information about the settings policies and procedures, activities, 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation stage. Regular newsletters are presented and parents are actively encouraged to discuss issues and information verbally. A range of scrapbooks depicting activities and events are freely available. All this ensures parents are fully informed and children's learning is soundly supported. All required policies are in place and are easily accessible to parents. However, although there is a detailed complaints procedure, this is not supported by a prepared recording system in the event of a complaint from a parent or carer.

The partnership with parents and carers of nursery funded children is good. They are kept well informed about their child's progress and themes to be undertaken. There are opportunities for parents to be involved in relevant activities at home, such as, a reading scheme and parents receive a profile of themes and focussed activities. This ensures parents are actively involved in their child's learning and provides opportunities to aid children's experiences. Each child has their own designated key worker and a detailed record of children's progress is maintained and shared effectively with parents. This is supported by strong liaison with the local school to assist with the children's transfer to full-time education. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

This is a strong provision. It is successful at making sure that the outcomes for children are positive. The child care practice is effective. Children are in the care of qualified, experienced staff that strongly support them to ensure they are happy and settled in the pre-school. They positively benefit from management and staff that are active in accessing training to develop their own skills.

There are regular staff and committee meetings. Responsibilities are shared and contribute to the pleasant atmosphere, created by the staff team, in which the children learn and play. The provision is committed to enable children to progress and develop to their full potential.

Leadership and management for nursery education is good. The three and the four-year-olds are making good progress towards the early learning goals. The leadership of the setting has a clear vision for the setting to support the children in their personal development and to reach their potential. The committee, supervisor and staff recognise the provisions strengths and weaknesses and there is a commitment to address areas for improvement. Staff a sound knowledge of the principles of the early learning goals.

The welfare, care and learning of the children are generally well promoted through the maintenance of records, policies and procedures both required and additional for the efficient and safe management of the provision. However, children's welfare is potentially compromised as some documentation is omitted, such as, the emergency treatment consent and the complaint record, and some are not maintained appropriately, such as, the risk assessments and fire evacuation logs. Documents are stored securely and safely in order to ensure children's privacy.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision agreed to ensure the key worker system incorporated all of the children. Children's well-being is well supported as all of the children have a designated key worker. This includes a designated member of staff who is key worker to all of the children aged under three years. There are effective systems in place to ensure individual children's welfare is supported and promoted. Children and parents are able to identify the designated key workers easily.

Nursery Education. At the last inspection a point for consideration was to continue to review planning and assessment systems to clarify individual children's goals. Children's progress, development and future learning is well identified in the individual assessment records. This is supported by detailed information regarding identifying areas for children to progress in their learning within the planning, including, for focussed activities.

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.

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):

- ensure children's health is promoted by requesting written parental permission to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advise or treatment in the future
- ensure procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are maintained with regard to the implementation of a complaint record, recording the general risk assessment undertaken and evaluation of fire evacuation logs

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):

- expand children's experiences by extending the range of media available on the mark-making table.

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