

Bowes Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	314067
Inspection date	24 April 2007
Inspector	Julie Morrison

Setting Address	Bowes Hutchinson CE Aided School, Barnard Castle, Co Durham, DL12 9LG
Telephone number	01833 628291
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Registered person	Bowes Pre-School
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?

Bowes Pre-School was registered in October 1993. It operates from the school hall and the building known as Woodpecker Cottage, adjacent to the school within the school yard, in the village of Bowes. A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday during term-time, 08.45 to 15.15. Children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 28 children aged from two years to school age, and two children aged under two years on roll. This includes seven funded three-year-olds and seven funded four-year-olds. Children attend from the local and surrounding areas. There are presently no children who speak English as an additional language. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school employs five staff. Three have a recognised early years qualification and two members of staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is promoted as suitable standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained throughout the nursery. Rooms are regularly cleaned and tables are washed before food is served. Staff follow suitable nappy changing procedures to reduce the risk of cross-infection, for example, they wear aprons, gloves, use changing mats and ensure that mats are cleaned after each use. Consistent adult support and guidance helps children to become increasingly independent in their personal care, for example, washing their hands before meals and after messy play or using the toilet. Older children confidently use the toilet themselves and explain that they must wash their hands so they do not 'put germs on the food and make us poorly'. However, children do not always wash hands before snacks, which increases the risk of cross-infection. A clear written policy regarding sick children and the effective recording of emergency contacts, medication permission and accidents promotes children's health and well-being.

All children have excellent opportunities for physical exercise, which contributes to their good health. The setting benefits from a variety of well resourced and beautiful outdoor play areas which the children are able to explore every day. They delight in following the winding 'Gruffalo path' to a giant wooden Gruffalo and mouse, passing the fox and snake on the way. They climb, balance, run and jump in the outdoor wooden play area, and ride bikes and scooters on the school yard. The children put on waterproofs and wellington boots and plant seeds in the 'secret garden' where they explore the maze, walk under willow tunnels, discuss the plants and see the fish in the pond. Such wonderful opportunities promote the children's learning and physical development and help them to gain control over their bodies.

Children at the pre-school enjoy a variety of healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit, dried fruit and vegetables. Meals are prepared on the premises using local produce, and are well balanced and nutritious. Even the youngest children are able to help themselves to fresh drinking water. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children's individual dietary needs are met, for example, by providing vegetarian options.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, secure and welcoming environment where the risks have been identified and minimised. The space is well organised so that children can move around freely and independently and explore the space. All children have access to a good range of safe and well maintained toys and resources that are suitable for their ages and stages of development. Toys are easily accessible to children being stored in child height boxes, trays and shelves to enable them to make independent choices.

Children are well protected because the setting has a good range of policies and procedures which are understood and implemented by staff, for example, lost and uncollected children. Risk assessments have been carried out and staff ensure that children are safe outside through close observation and keeping gates closed. Bark chippings under climbing equipment and a bolted gate to the pond further safeguard children. Internally, the premises are secure, doors are kept locked and appropriate safety equipment is in place, for example, smoke alarms and radiator guards. Electrical and fire equipment is regularly checked and the setting has a clear

written fire procedure in place with up to date fire drills, to further safeguard children. However, although there is a visitors book in place, this is not regularly used, which could be a potential risk to children. There is a comprehensive outings procedure in place which ensures that children are kept safe on outings. High ratios are maintained, appropriate consents are in place and staff carry first aid kits and mobile telephones with emergency contact numbers. Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe as staff discuss road safety and rules with them, and ensure that children hold hands.

Children are effectively safeguarded as staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection, including what to do if an allegation was made against themselves. All staff have attended child protection training and have a secure understanding of the signs and symptoms to be aware of. There is a clear written child protection policy in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are developing warm relationships with each other and the staff, who are welcoming and give the children lots of attention. They eagerly participate in a good range of child-centred and adult-led activities and enjoy a range of experiences which promote all areas of development. For example, they paint pictures, match coloured insects to coloured cards and enjoy the role play area. Staff interact well with the children as they sit on the floor and read books with them; a child shouts with delight when he gets his apron on to make a flower picture with glue, tissue and paint. However, some of the very youngest children are not always fully engaged in activities as some activities, such as circle time and outdoor activities, go on a little too long for them and their stage of development. Staff do, nevertheless, try to involve them as much as possible and the children are happy exploring their environment independently.

Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are beginning to incorporate this into their planning and work. Photographic evidence is displayed clearly linking to the framework and increasing children's sense of achievement and self-esteem.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most staff have a secure understanding of the Foundation Stage and the stepping stones. Clear and effective plans are in place covering all areas of learning and showing suitable differentiation for children's abilities. Staff make good use of questioning to extend children's learning, for example, they ask the children, 'How many have you got?' 'What does it feel like?' Staff take time to talk to the children, they answer questions and promote learning through discussion. For example, they read a story and ask the children, 'Which vegetables grow in the ground and which on top?' Staff make observations of children as they engage in free play and focused activities and these are linked to the 'flying start 2' profile which incorporates the stepping stones. However, there is no procedure for recording the development and progress children are making towards the early learning goals.

The room is well laid out and organised so that children can have effective learning experiences and lots of fun, for example, role play, reading, computers and creative activities. Staff ensure that children have a good balance between adult- and child-led activities, and children show a positive attitude towards activities and are eager to join in. The children share well and show care and concern for one another. For example, older children hold the younger children's hands as they walk across the balance beam. They have formed good relationships with the

staff and each other; one child seeks out his friend to show him his picture, his friend tells him, 'it's lovely'. The children show independence, they know the routines well are most try to put their own coats on and try to peel oranges at snack time.

Communication skills are developing well, the children show good listening and speaking skills. They join in enthusiastically with well known rhymes and enjoy reading books both as a group and individually. They are beginning to link sounds to letters and have good opportunities to practise early writing skills, as some children independently sign themselves in on a morning, holding pencils correctly and developing fine motor skills. The children have excellent opportunities to learn about the world around them as they go into the garden to do planting. They discuss the different plants and how they get water through their roots; one child explains, 'they have a life, they need water and sunshine to grow'. Constant interaction with staff turns all opportunities into a learning experience, for example, one child finds a snail and staff bring out a magnifying glass for children to look at it and they encourage the children to smell the herbs to see what they are.

Good questioning by staff is helping children to be interested in numbers and counting. Staff encourage them to count the number of insects and match them to the number. Children use of mathematical language is developing, they talk about how the pots of soil are half full and discuss sizes of feet, 'mine are bigger, mine smaller'. However, further opportunities for children to develop their understanding of numbers are missed, for example, using everyday activities such as snack time to work out basic calculations. Children are developing confidence in technology, they use the mouse successfully to complete simple matching games on the computer. They use imagination well, they have a garden shop role play area where they collect all the fruit and vegetables to have a dinner party, and one boy explains he is making 'grape cake'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children at the pre-school are treated individually and valued. For example, a wealth of children's work is displayed along with photographs of the staff and the children. Children have excellent opportunities to learn about their local community and the world around them. They go for walks to the local castle and have attended church for mock weddings and christenings, where they dressed up and had the local reverend conduct a service. The children go on trips, for example, to local farms where they wash the pigs and collect eggs and fruit picking, which they took to the ice cream factory to make into ice-cream. Staff are aware that they live in a rural community and are committed to the children being part of that community, but also gaining an awareness of other cultures as they celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year and Divali. The children also benefit from visitors to the pre-school such as an Aboriginal artist who made pictures and told stories of Australia, and an Indian lady who brought Indian food for the children to try. The setting has a Special Educational Needs Coordinator who demonstrates a good understanding of the needs of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and is committed to working with parents, carers and other organisations to ensure that the individual needs of the children are met.

Children's behaviour in the pre-school is generally good; they benefit from positive relationships with staff who know them well. Staff recognise when children are tired and children confidently go to them for cuddles, support and reassurance. Good behaviour is reinforced through praise and positive role modelling from staff, who are calm and polite with the children. Staff set consistent boundaries and use age appropriate techniques such as distraction and explanation.

For example, staff remind children to share toys, and talk to them about how they would feel if someone did not share with them. As a result, children are happy and settled at the pre-school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Children benefit from very positive relationships between staff and parents who speak highly of the care and education their children receive. Parents receive a pre-school prospectus prior to their child joining which includes setting information and information about the Foundation Stage. Information relevant to the individual child is gathered from parents and carers to ensure children's individual needs can be met. Parents are kept informed about general pre-school activities through regular newsletters and a notice board, which includes a written complaints procedure. Parents receive daily verbal feedback about their child, however, there is no formal way of keeping them informed about their child's progression towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Secure recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by staff with relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Regular staff meetings and staff appraisals ensure that staff are valued in their work and work together well as a team. However, no formal induction procedure is in place which means that new staff could potentially be unaware of policies and procedures. Staff are committed to attending relevant training to enhance their personal development and the care and education of the children, for example, they all hold current first aid certificates.

The setting has a comprehensive collection of policies and procedures in place which are implemented and understood by staff. All required documentation is in place and securely stored for easy access and to ensure confidentiality. Children are well cared for in an organised environment where space has been used to its maximum potential, allowing them to move around freely and independently. Quiet areas ensure that children are able to rest if required and physical development is promoted through an excellent outdoor area.

Leadership and management are good. The manager is aware of her role and responsibilities and is committed to the setting. She works closely with external agencies and has secured Pre-School Learning Alliance accreditation. The setting benefits from good relationships with the primary school to ensure smooth transition for the children into school. The manager is currently studying for the Foundation Stage degree and as a result, both her and the deputy have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage and are committed to developing the care and education that the children receive. The manager values the staff and as a result creates a happy and friendly environment in which to care for children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the pre-school was asked to ensure that the complaints procedure includes Ofsted details and that registration showed when staff were present.

The complaints procedure includes Ofsted details and a daily diary clearly shows staffs hours of attendance.

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 complaint 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 children's hygiene is promoted through washing hands before snacks
- ensure that children's safety is supported by signing in visitors to the setting
- further develop activities to support the development and inclusion of younger children

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 a method for assessing and recording children's learning and progress towards the early learning goals
- increase opportunities for children to further develop knowledge and skills in calculations
- develop a procedure for informing parents about their child's learning and progress towards the early learning goals
- develop a written induction procedure for new members of staff

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