

# Early Birds Neighbourhood Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY344801
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 April 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Timothy Butcher
<b>Setting Address</b>	Birdwell Primary School, Hollis Close, Long Ashton, BRISTOL, BS41 9AZ
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<b>E-mail</b>	birdwell.nursery@n-somerset.gov.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	North Somerset Council
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

The Early Birds Neighbourhood Nursery was registered in 2006. It operates from a purpose-built building in the grounds of Birdwell school in Long Ashton, North Somerset. It serves the local and surrounding area. A maximum of 62 children aged from three months to under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00 for 51 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure, enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 116 children on role of these, 53 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 members of staff who work directly with children. Of these, eight hold level three qualifications and three other staff members are working towards a level three qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is actively promoted. Children benefit from the healthy meals provided and have good opportunities to learn about healthy eating. Snack and lunch times are relaxed and very social times for children as the staff sit along side them and warmly converse. Children's dietary needs are closely met as there is very clear information sought from parents about specific dietary needs such as milk or nut allergies. Menu information is provided for parents and on display. Staff share information with children about healthy eating in a number of ways, for example, through discussion at the table and also through specific activities like the tasting of a wide variety of different fruits from around the world. In the babies room children sit together with the staff to eat. Children are well supported to develop new skills in feeding themselves. Babies receive plenty of physical contact while being fed. Good information about such things as sleep patterns, feeds and nappy changes are shared with parents upon collection, usually by the Key Person.

Children are sensitively cared for should they have an accident and require first aid. There are clear policies and procedures for dealing with accidents and these are consistently followed. Parents are kept fully informed and asked to sign in acknowledgement that information has been shared with them.

Children benefit from good opportunities for physical exercise and fresh air. Older children clearly enjoy the free access to the outside area and regularly take their play outside throughout the day. They explore, test and develop physical control in stimulating outdoor experiences. Each 'key person' has a very good understanding of each child's stage of development within their 'key group'. This means the youngest children are confident to try out new skills, for example, a two-year-old is thrilled as he successfully manoeuvres his sit-on car backwards into the fence. He carefully goes back and forwards until he is able to turn around and works out how he can open the door and get out on his own. Older children develop a positive attitude to physical exercise and are keen to practise new skills. They delight in the challenges of a versatile range of activities, such as steering the sit-on and stand-on scooters. A child is physically supported by a member of staff to use the flower pot stilts. She gains her balance and tries a few first steps before she is able to set off confidently on her own unaided. Non-mobile babies have a blanket to sit on and can sit, wriggle and stretch. Children of different ages have the opportunity to be outside together and generally benefit from the interaction. Although babies and toddlers usually use space towards one end of the safety surface, the area is not defined sufficiently to fully protect them from the more boisterous activities of older children.

Children have very good opportunities to develop small muscle skills and hand-to-eye coordination through a wide range of carefully selected and appropriately planned, free flow activities.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children have a very safe environment in which to play. Access to the premises is very strictly monitored. Fire safety drills are regularly undertaken. Staff are vigilant and have a good awareness for children's safety at all times. They achieve a balance between providing freedom

for children to explore and setting safe limits for them. For example, when children are outside and use the castle, they are prompted to climb sensibly. They are given good explanations about why they should do so. This allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. Although the provider has carried out a thorough risk assessment of the premises and adds new equipment to the assessment when it is bought, the risk assessment itself is not reviewed with sufficient frequency. Visual daily checks are undertaken of the premises and of the equipment put out in readiness for children. However, some control measures such as electric socket covers, are not always in place and visual checks have not picked this up. As a result children's safety has the potential to be undermined.

Children greatly benefit from the attractive and child-friendly surroundings that staff have worked hard to establish. Space is very well organised to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for children. This significantly contributes to children's enjoyment and learning. The babies room has been thoughtfully decorated to create a calm and relaxing atmosphere with carefully selected colours, textures and materials. Resources are of a high quality and numerous. They are at a suitable level and are well planned to cover the whole of children's development.

The pre-school room is attractively decorated. Low-level resources are very well ordered with labels and with photographs that promote ease of access by children. They are very effectively encouraged to exercise choice and to take their play in the direction that they choose. The room has been set out into defined areas to cover each area of learning and furnished with good quality resources. Helpful information for parents and for staff is displayed at a higher level. Displays explain what happens in particular areas and there is an open questions board as a prompt for staff. Learning diaries are made easily accessible to parents and children in the hallway and good information about what children have learnt is displayed on the wall in a helpful format. The interview room is used daily for groups of children and its presentation and décor has begun to be developed to create more space and to make it more inviting for children.

Children have their welfare safeguarded because staff have a clear awareness of their responsibilities in regard to the protection of children and a sound understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of potential abuse. There is a clear procedure in place to inform staff of the action to take should they have concerns about a child.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Babies and children make good progress in all areas, given their starting points. Babies and children are well cared for by a skilled and committed staff team who provide very good learning experiences for children in a play environment that is vibrant. Staff carefully plan the environment to enable children to access resources and make independent decisions about their own learning. All children and parents are warmly welcomed to the setting. Children are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery which puts them first. They are very well supported to settle because there is good communication with parents and the staff skilfully reassure children with warm and caring interactions.

Staff have a very solid knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework and effectively plan for children's next steps in development. Observations of the resources that babies like to play with contribute to a good planning process in the baby room. New planning covers each aspect and component within the framework to ensure children's whole development is considered. Detailed observations of what each child has learnt are recorded through a learning diary using

the format from the framework. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the diary through 'wow' observations, through 'the parents voice' and through conferencing. Some parents have considerable involvement in their children's learning in this way.

#### Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a very solid knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and of how to support children's learning through play. The new system for planning is comprehensive and covers each of the stepping stones in each area of learning. Regular and insightful observations of what children have learnt are recorded in learning diaries with written evidence and photographic evidence. Learning diaries provide very good information with very few inconsistencies in the interpretation of observations in the record. Planning by each Key person carefully follows each child's identified interests. Activities are evaluated and clear learning outcomes are shown. As a result children's next steps in development are clearly identified and they make at least good progress across the areas of learning because learning is maximised.

Children have very good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and fully involved in a broad range of exciting and developmentally appropriate activities that fire their imaginations, capture their interest and provide them with suitable challenge. There is a strong focus on child-initiated play and children have very good opportunities to practise their developing skills through carefully targeted free-flow activities. As a result children are motivated, have their interest maintained and explore at their own pace.

Children have good opportunities to learn quickly as they use mathematic skills in everyday activities, for example, in a spontaneous discussion when building a jungle, they discuss size and shape of the pieces and count the number of animals they have each. They happily count pegs, cars and each other. At lunchtime they are encouraged to count the number of plates and explore the concept of one more and one less. There is plenty of opportunity for children to use comparative and positional language in their games, for example when building with construction sets or when matching pieces of puzzle.

Children are encouraged to label their own pictures and most children competently recognise their own names, such as at snack time. Children enjoy stories, reading and talking in a group. In story-time a child spontaneously talks of the words that she recognises from the book that is being held up and read. Staff skilfully ask questions to get children to think and to predict. They leave sentences and words unfinished for children to fill in.

Children have regular opportunities to take their learning outside. They learn about their own world through imaginative and creatively presented activities, such as growing plants from seeds. They explore the feel of the soil. They count the number of seeds and trowels of soil as they fill the pot. Staff provide clear information and children listen and follow instructions. Children's learning is continually extended through very good interaction by staff, for example, children are prompted to notice shape and smell, and to draw on their own experiences of the garden. Children enjoy role-play activities both inside and outside. Several girls build tents together and excitedly climb 'princess castles' outside. They squeal with delight at being chased by something imaginary. They use long pieces of scrap materials creatively to wrap around themselves and the castle. Children spontaneously beat the pots and pans hanging from the fence to make music. Inside, two boys make good use of the home corner which is set up as a doctors surgery. They give the fireman patient an injection that 'makes him better'. Children

are skilful at using simple computer programs and enjoy free access to a wider range of technology such as tills in the role play area and cassette players.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. An excellent partnership with parents significantly contributes to the high quality of care and learning of children. Parents report very positively indeed about the setting in general, the approachability of its staff and the rich experiences provided for their children in both the babies room and the pre-school room. There is very comprehensive information sharing on many levels and parents are able to fully contribute to their child's learning within the setting. The Key person system is effective in sharing information through discussion. Permissions from parents are routinely gained and they are kept well informed about day-to-day events. Parents comment positively about the learning diaries that provide very good information about the progress a child makes. Staff work very hard to ensure information is shared with parents both in face-to-face discussion, the learning diaries and through information that is displayed.

An inclusive approach is fully promoted throughout the nursery. Children with learning difficulties or disability have their needs very closely met as staff work very constructively to carry through individual education plans and to ensure inclusion. Staff work in close partnership with parents and carers and with the other professional involved. Sometimes the partnership is excellent. Individual action plans are regularly reviewed and form an integral part of the next steps planning within the nursery. Parents are fully involved, for example, through their contributions through the learning diaries. There is very good communication and a strong commitment from staff that strongly contributes to the overall progress that individual children make.

Staff have a positive approach to the management of behaviour. Children are well behaved overall and develop caring and cooperative relationships with staff and each other. Staff provide very good role models for children. They have high expectations of them and provide consistent boundaries. The setting is in the process of developing a conflict resolution approach. This has yet to be implemented. Children are well supported to resolve issues through staff intervention but as yet have fewer opportunities to learn and practise the skills to problem-solve for themselves. Children routinely learn to share and take turns in a host of activities throughout the day.

Children are treated with respect and enjoy warm relationships with staff. Staff offer children choice and provide plenty of praise and encouragement. As a result children grow in confidence and are helped to feel positive about themselves. Some planned activities successfully introduce children to the wider world and to different cultures. Children enjoy celebrating festivals from their own and others' religions and cultures and learn that people who are different are equally valued. They also learn about diversity through the positive images they encounter when using a good range of multi-cultural resources including dressing up materials, toys, puzzles and books. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children's progress is significantly enhanced by the very good organisation of the nursery. Children play in a well organised environment where time, space and resources are used

effectively, to offer them a wide variety of experiences and to maximise their learning. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. Other documentation in the majority of instances is meticulously maintained. The nursery has appropriate procedures in place in regard to the recruitment and the suitability of staff.

The leadership and management is good. The manager, support teacher and senior staff have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and are proactive in providing continuous improvement, for example, through the detailed action plan following the last inspection and through the clear commitment to staff training. The new process of planning for children's immediate next steps in development is very solid. Learning diaries provide very good information with very few inconsistencies in the interpretation of observations in the record. Competent and knowledgeable staff have a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework, respectively, and take responsibility for planning and evaluating activities within their designated areas of responsibility. As a result children make at least good progress.

The whole staff team work very effectively together and there are very high levels of communication to ensure children's needs are met. Children benefit from the good continuity of care created by the high staffing ratios and by a skilled staff team who are clearly committed to providing good care for children. The key worker system works well to support children and parents. Children are eager to attend and thoroughly enjoy their time at the nursery. The provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection of nursery education, under a previous registration, three recommendations were agreed to improve the quality of education. These related to the staff's knowledge and understanding of both child initiated and adult led activities, the systems of planning and how best to successfully manage large mixed age-groups of children.

Since the last inspection the nursery has been re-registered. It has addressed each of the areas through a comprehensive action plan. The setting have reorganised its grouping of children. Pre-school children in their final year are regularly grouped separately for some activities such as story time. This better promotes children's learning. A key worker system, staff training and a clear move towards child-initiated play have contributed significantly to the quality of children's learning. A new comprehensive system of planning has been introduced and as a result children's learning and achievement is tracked. The information is used to inform the planning for their next steps in development. Children now make at least good progress, given their starting points.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since registration 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):

- review the use of space in the outside area, particularly in regard to younger children when older children are present
- review the risk assessment regularly and ensure that control measures such as electric socket covers are in place

#### **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):

- consolidate the recording of observations that interpret what children have learnt and that contribute to the learning profile.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)