

Beckbury Acorns Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	224039
Inspection date	10 July 2007
Inspector	Mary Anne Henderson
Setting Address	The Old School Room, Beckbury C of E School, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 9DQ
Telephone number	01952 750755
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Registered person	Beckbury Acorns Pre-School Playgroup
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?

Beckbury Acorns Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1980. It operates from a demountable building within the grounds of Beckbury C of E primary school in the village of Beckbury in Shropshire. A maximum of 16 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 to 12:00 and from 9:00 to 15:00 on Mondays and Wednesdays. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 17 children from two years to under five years on roll. This includes four funded three-year-olds and five funded four-year-olds. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The pre-school supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are currently three members of staff working with the children, all of whom hold early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. The pre-school receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are learning about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a good range of indoor and outdoor activities and use a broad range of small and large equipment to develop their muscles. For example, they climb, slide and use balance equipment during indoor physical play and they run around in the fresh air, ride on tricycles and throw and catch balls during outdoor play.

Children enjoy playing in an environment that is well maintained and clean. They independently wash their hands after painting, after visiting the toilet and before they eat. Children's welfare is promoted well because the staff are first aid qualified and they have sought written parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment or advice for all children on roll.

Children learn about healthy eating because they eat fruit, crumpets, vegetables and salad for snack time. They also enjoy drinks of water or milk with their snacks and they have free access to drinking water throughout the session. The children enjoy social interaction with their peers and the staff during snack time as they talk about their family life. Children eat healthy lunches provided by the school.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety of the children is well maintained. Staff ensure areas are safe for the children before they arrive and they use a comprehensive risk assessment format which includes areas, equipment and toys. The children learn about personal safety through activities such as learning to cross the road safely. They also practise the fire evacuation procedures with the staff.

Premises are welcoming for parents and their children. There is an informative notice board and table in the entrance hall which provides information about policies, planning and routines. There is also a range of children's work on display for parents and their children to enjoy. Children use a range of equipment and toys suitable to their age and stage of development. The layout of the space is favourable to children's learning. For example, resources are low reach and labelled to encourage children to access them thereby maintaining their confidence and independence.

Children's welfare is maintained because staff have attended child protection training. Staff know what to do and who to contact should they have a concern about a child in their care and they have the current Local Safeguarding Children's Board contact details at hand. There is a child protection policy in place to keep parents informed of procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

To support the development of younger children, the staff have attended training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Key workers observe the children and use the development cards to ensure young children are progressing in all areas of learning. Children are independent, share and turn-take with their peers and the younger children are keen to help each other at tidy up time. However, children do not pour their own drinks at snack time which possibly

compromises their independent learning. They are well behaved and they have regard for each other. The children are involved in a good range of free play and planned activities. For example, they enjoy stories, circle time and imaginary play. They also enjoy finding out about the world around them as they explore how plants grow and the life cycle of a frog.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are confident and ask their peers to pass them the scissors during planned activities. They enjoy being responsible as they hand out the plates at snack time and independently spread toppings on their toast. The children put on and take off their own coats and know to go and wash their hands after painting activities. They find out about the world around them as they explore a range of festivals around the calendar year. Children explore imaginary play as they use the small world people, dressing-up clothes, dolls and equipment in the home corner. They access a range of resources because they are low level and kept in labelled boxes thereby encouraging them to make their own choices. However, during child-initiated play children do not always have access to an extensive range of resources. For example, the sand tray is at times covered and there are limited resources available at the writing table during child-initiated play times. This possibly compromises their learning.

Children access books in an inviting comfortable book corner where they can relax with their peers. They sit and concentrate well during circle time when they explore mathematics by taking it in turn to count the children and clap their hands to count up to 12. They listen and take it in turns to talk, supported by the staff. Children link sounds and letters as they think about the day of the week and look in boxes to find out what begins with a or b. All children practice handwriting as they use sheets that encourage them to write letters and numbers, thereby building their knowledge of the alphabet and numbers from one to 10. The children enjoy joining in with stories during story time with the staff. They know and can predict the story endings as they listen to Billy goat Gruff. Children explore shape, space and measures as they enjoy playing with compost, water and cooking activities.

Children are finding out about the world around them as they explore and investigate their surroundings. They go on walks to look at the wildlife and trees. They enjoy making three dimensional creations with junk and glue during planned activities. The children freely explore paints and crayons and they draw and write at the designated writing table. They look at and identify the uses of every day technology through planned activities. Children look at equipment for weighing and baking and they play with tills and telephones during imaginary play. They also have free daily access to the computer and use a range of software to build on what they already know. Children have a good sense of space as they move around their indoor and outdoor areas, being careful not to run into their peers as they ride their tricycles. They climb and balance on the small and large equipment to develop their small and large muscles. Children also enjoy using a range of tools such as knives, cutters, pencils and scissors. Children like to dress-up in doctors outfits and sari's and walk around the play areas with their dolls and chat to other children and the staff as they pass by.

Staff are very good role models for children. They praise the children as they tidy up or help each other with jobs and they encourage them to take turns at listening and talking. Staff talk quietly with each other and the children to ensure a relaxing atmosphere for children where they can hear and be heard. The staff spend much of their time directly with the children joining in with their play and asking them open-ended questions to extend and consolidate their learning. The staff team have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning and

they are suitably experienced and qualified. They know that children learn through play and they provide sufficient time, resources and equipment to extend children's learning and promote progression. However, the staff do not always ensure the children have access to an extensive range of equipment and resources so that children make informed choices about what they want to do during child-initiated play time, thereby possibly compromising this area of their learning. Staff work well as a team and meet regularly to discuss issues about the curriculum and the children attending. Planning and assessment is good and the plans include what the children will do. The planning is informed by what children can already do and the areas the children need to develop further. There are good strategies in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language. The staff have previous experience of caring for children who may need further support in these areas and they would seek the support of parents and other professionals to ensure consistency and the inclusion of all children on roll.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well behaved and respond to strategies used by the staff. For example, they are praised for their efforts and they receive rewards stickers for positive behaviour. This promotes their self-esteem and gives children a good sense of belonging. Children have regard for their peers and are able to share and turn-take with the resources. They explore festivals such as Easter, Diwali and Chinese New Year through creative activities and food tasting. They play with a range of resources that positively reflects diversity. There are good strategies in place to support children that attend the group with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure consistency and inclusion of all children on roll. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

There are positive relationships between the parents and the staff. Parents of young children are able to have an appointment with their child's key worker during parents' afternoons. The key worker talks through the child's progression with the parents. Parents access an informative notice board which displays the last inspection report, a range of information about the ' Birth to three matters' framework and other interesting leaflets.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The staff keep the parents informed about their child's developmental progression through discussion, appointment meetings with the key worker and through free access to their child's development files. All parents receive the group's prospectus which outlines their aims and objectives. Parents also receive a regular newsletter to keep them up-to-date with issues including current themes and fund-raising events.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The children are cared for by staff who are qualified and experienced. Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are sound thereby ensuring children's welfare is maintained. Documentation is kept up-to-date and signed by both parties, including accident, incident and medication records. The register shows attendance of children and the staff and all visitors are required to sign the visitors book after their identity has been thoroughly checked. This maintains children's health, welfare and safety. Policies of the setting are made available to the parents as they are displayed in the operational plan. The pre-school are currently updating the operational plan to ensure it accurately reflects the National Standards and the service provided.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff attend regular training as supported by the management. This has a positive impact on the children's care and education. The provision for nursery education is monitored. However, the programme for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education does not take account of the previous key issues and recommendations made at the last inspection. This possibly compromises children's learning. Staff talk to parents at the time of entry, observe children at play and forward plan for children's individual needs to ensure progression throughout children's pre-school years. All staff and the management have a sound understanding of the concept of equality of opportunity and they work well together to ensure the inclusion of all children. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the time of the last inspection the pre-school was asked to address three key issues and six recommendations. They were asked to provide opportunities for children to access a broad range of resources during child initiated play and provide opportunities for children to further develop their skills in reading and writing. The pre-school was also asked to provide opportunities for children to recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. The pre-school provided more resources for children during their child-initiated play and provided a designated reading and writing area. However, the range of resources available for child-initiated play is not extensive. For example, the children do not always have access to the sand tray and the writing table and reading area is not always inviting for children. This area of children's learning has been partly addressed but needs to be further improved to ensure children have access to an extensive range of resources during child-initiated play times. Children are now involved in a range of activities where they find out about the changes to their bodies when they are active. For example, when the nurse comes to visit the children now listen to their heart beat following physical play. This promotes their learning about how their body works.

The pre-school was also asked to make sure that trailing leads and open sockets are made safe and to ensure the first aid box is checked regularly. The group now operate from a new demountable building. The trailing leads and sockets are now safe for children and the first aid box is checked regularly by a qualified first aid member of staff. This ensures children's health and safety is maintained at all times. The pre-school was also asked to provide opportunities for parents to receive information on their children's progress, include contact details of Ofsted in the complaints policy and to update the child protection procedures ensuring it outlines what staff should do if they have any concerns about a child. The group addressed these issues by implementing an open afternoon for all parents to talk to their child's key worker about their child's progression. They also updated the complaints policy and the child protection procedures to ensure parents have access to contact details of Ofsted. Also, the child protection procedures were updated to ensure all staff know what to do should they have a concern about a child in their care. Children's welfare is now well maintained.

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

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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):

- further improve opportunities for children to develop their independence during snack 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):

- further improve opportunities for children to access an extensive range of resources and equipment during child-initiated play time
- develop the programme for identifying strengths and weaknesses of the nursery education.

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