

# Bumble Bees Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101555
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Linda Janet Witts

<b>Setting Address</b>	Trinity Rooms, Field Road, Stroud, Gloucester, GL5 2HX
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<b>Telephone number</b>	07817 468732
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<b>Registered person</b>	Bumble Bees Playgroup
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<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
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<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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](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?

Bumble Bees Playgroup was founded over 21 years ago. It is a committee run group and operates from Trinity Church hall in a residential district of Stroud.

The playgroup provides full-day-care for up to 24 children aged between two years nine months and five years. There are currently 30 children on roll of whom 26 are funded three and four-year-olds. The group welcomes children with special needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

The playgroup operates from 09.00 to 12.00 hours Monday to Friday, and from 13.00 to 15.30 hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The children are cared for in the main hall, with toilet facilities accessible from the hall. They are supervised when crossing the side room to access the garden area. A kitchen is also available for use.

The playgroup employs four members of staff. The leaders hold level two and three qualifications in child care and education. Other staff are also trained in childcare. They are all trained in first aid and child protection.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are actively encouraged to be healthy. They learn about good hygiene practice and healthy eating. They also get plenty of fresh air and exercise. In their quest for independent personal care children are supported well by staff. Children routinely wash their hands after completing messy activities and before they eat. Staff are on hand to ensure that hands are washed thoroughly with soap and water before snack and lunch times. They talk with children about germs and the importance of good hygiene. Children cannot always access tissues freely to wipe their noses but staff are quick to provide them for those children that need them. In the event that children require a change of clothes staff deal with such situations sensitively and the children's privacy is ensured.

Children's health is well promoted through clear routines for administration of medication and first aid. Risk of injury to children is effectively minimised and any minor accidents dealt with by the staff who are trained in first aid. The well-being of children who become unwell at playgroup is assured because staff quickly assess the situation, contact parents and reassure the children, making sure they are comfortable whilst they await collection.

Children eat well and enjoy the social experience that snack and mealtimes provide. They enjoy a variety of nutritious, healthy snacks, that include plenty of fresh fruit. Hungrier children ask for more and staff happily ensure that all children have enough to meet their requirements. Some children stay for lunch and bring their own packed lunches. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy foods within the lunch boxes.

Children have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills. They go outdoors regularly. Children are able to play in the garden area and often go for long walks locally. Indoors the children move between activities freely. The two, three and four-year-olds join in dancing activities with gusto, following actions demonstrated by staff. They march and jig in time with the music. They also link up with others, hold hands and twirl around together, giggling as they get up speed. Children are able to practise different physical skills as they pedal tricycles and wheeled equipment, play ball games, use climbing and balancing apparatus and complete obstacle courses. They further develop their co-ordination as they undertake activities such as, water play. They fill bottles, pour and transfer water from one container to another. Children practise using scissors and learn to carry them safely. They also use tools carefully during playdough and construction activities.

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

The provision is good.

Children are helped to learn to keep themselves safe. The hall and garden area used by the children are secure and identified risks minimised, to keep children safe. Indoors a child-friendly play environment is created. Tables, chairs, storage units with display boards attached, are set out with inviting activities for children to choose from. The arrangement enables children to develop good independence as they move between activities and utilise available resources.

The value of outdoor play is embraced and the area routinely safety checked before use. Children are supervised well by the staff who allow children to explore and take risks, whilst monitoring their safety closely. Regular fire drills help to familiarise children with emergency evacuation procedures and all staff are clear about their role in emergency evacuation procedures.

The children use resources that are of good quality and well-maintained. The resources are appropriate to the children's ages and differing stages of development. Children can access resources to change or extend planned activities and know they can ask staff for items stored in the playgroup cupboard. The children also play an active role in tidying up, helping to maintain a safe play environment. They learn how to carry and use resources safely, to protect themselves and others.

Children's welfare is effectively safeguarded and promoted through staff knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. Staff are trained in child protection. The staff are experienced in handling child protection issues sensitively and working jointly with families and outside professionals to achieve successful outcomes for the children involved. The written child protection policy does not reflect local safeguarding children board procedures, including action to be taken in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. However, all members of staff are clear about appropriate courses of action to take.

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

The provision is good.

Many aspects of children's enjoyment and achievement are outstanding. Children have a wonderful time at the playgroup. All children, including those who are new to the playgroup, arrive with enthusiasm. They are relaxed in the company of the attentive staff. They are encouraged to express themselves through careful staff questioning and genuine interest in individual conversation. Children benefit from staff knowledge of their individual needs and abilities. The children engage in a broad range of exciting activities suited to their interests. The youngest children's care needs are well addressed through adaptation of activity plans and through additional support offered, as appropriate.

As a result of the sensitive care offered, children are happy and confident. They are very independent. They make choices from all available resources and activities, take care of their personal care needs and assist with daily routines.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children benefit from the staff's childcare experience and good understanding of how children learn. Staff have a very good understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. The playgroup leaders and staff work together to implement an effective curriculum, to promote children's learning across all six areas. Most areas of learning receive sufficient attention and children's progress in learning is generally very good. Progress in some areas is excellent.

A key carer system is implemented effectively. Staff share their knowledge of children's individual progress, learning styles and interests using the information to inform future planning. Individual education plans and additional support are used, when required, to ensure that all children are able to progress well. Staff interaction and questioning encourages children to develop their language skills. They have identified the need to give greater attention to problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Staff know instinctively when to offer children support and play an

active part in children's play and when to stand back and allow children to play freely. They try to gather as much information as they can from parents about their children when they start at playgroup and use observation to track children's progress, as they play and learn. Progress records are maintained for each child. The staff are keen to develop these in order to make it clearer for parents to see where their children are in their learning.

Children develop good relationships with staff and other children in the group. They show very good levels of concentration during activities. They sit together at meal times, to listen to stories and during group activities. They learn to take-turns and share with others. All children are familiar with the daily routine and confidently go about their play activities, choosing what they do and extending activities as they wish.

Many of the three and four-year-olds communicate with confidence. They are keen to talk in large and small groups, to both familiar and unfamiliar adults. They talk through what they are doing, make observations, ask questions and share personal experiences with others. Those that find it more difficult to speak make their needs known through gestures. They are introduced to new vocabulary and the supportive staff use repetition and different teaching strategies agreed with parents and speech therapists to help the children with spoken language. Children benefit from opportunities to make marks, paint, chalk, draw and crayon. They can help themselves to paper and writing implements. They give meaning to the marks made and many draw with increasing control, for example, drawing lines and circles. Children join in rhyming songs and stories. A comfortable book area is well-used by the children. They enjoy looking at books on their own, with their friends or adults. They turn pages carefully and show interest in the illustrations. Stories enthusiastically read by an adult, to the whole group of children, engage their interest. A mobile library regularly visits the group and the group also visits the town library. This enables children to look at a wider range of books and hear stories read by the librarians.

Children's progress in mathematical development is weaker than in the other areas of their learning. Some children demonstrate an interest in numbers and counting and get some numbers in the correct order when they count. Staff do not routinely give children a reason to count, compare numbers of objects or use numbers as labels. Children do use mathematical ideas in their play; for example, selecting objects by shape and size to complete jigsaws and to construct. They will also cut paper resources to the desired size for the task in hand. Many children are good at matching colours and patterns, for example, a three-year-old recognises that another child has the same colour plate as his. Another child studies a photograph of herself and a group of children. The heads of the other children are missing. She then scans the room and the photograph together. Then she announces who the individuals are having matched the clothing she sees in the photograph to the individuals in the group. A child at the playdough activity talks to an adult about the size of available cutters. She reports that the piece of dough cut out by a cutter is a circle shape and a bigger circular hole is left in the dough.

Children really enjoy exploring, investigating and experimenting. They like to make observations within their surrounding environment. When out in the garden area children explore their natural environment and collect leaves and conkers. They dig in the soil and gravel, transferring the materials in different ways. They see horses up close in local farmland, whilst out walking. They visit the local churchyard and go into the town centre. Here they meet different shopkeepers such as a hairdresser, baker and stall holders in the food market. They visit the fishmonger and taste cheeses at the cheese stall. The children like to explore substances like 'gloop', a corn-flour and water mixture. They watch how it changes consistency. They also effect change upon water by adding different food colourings. Children are very interested in

how things work and information, communication technology. They operate a cassette player, adjusting the volume; they are keen to print out digital photographs of themselves, taken by staff during the course of the session and they use the playgroup laptop to look at the photographic record of past activities. They can also complete simple computer programmes. Children celebrate a range of religious and cultural festivals. They can see some positive images of culture, gender and disability, in books and other resources.

Children are physically able. They demonstrate the ability to carry out tasks such as, drawing activities, cutting and sticking, painting and doing jigsaw puzzles, with increasing control. They manipulate resource pieces carefully within their fingers and many can negotiate the fastenings on their clothes, aprons and shoes. Children mould playdough and clay, effecting change upon it, as they use tools, shape it with their fingers, prod, knead and roll it. They also use tools such as, screwdrivers to connect construction pieces together.

Children's creative opportunities are excellent. They engage in regular art activities on a small and large scale. They combine different materials and learn different painting techniques. Although the art and craft activities are planned once introduced to the materials and suggested activity ideas, children are then able to develop the activity as they wish, for example, children use water on paint brushes to make marks on a chalk board easel. They ask for paint and paper and start to express themselves with careful brush strokes. They start to suggest ideas to one another. They mix the paints, add more water, share the mixture between a number of paint pots. A child decides that they are mixing to make a cake and that each should add the ingredients in turn. They giggle as in turn they mix vigorously causing the solution to spray out. Next they paint their hands and do a piece of art work together before proudly showing it to observers. Many art activities develop into sensory exploration and children relish such opportunities having plenty of fun with their peers. Another example of this is clay modelling. They smell it and describe the texture as they add water. As the wet clay oozes through their fingers they show delight on their faces. Then they mischievously decorate the surrounding area with slippery handprints. The three and four-year-olds are very imaginative. They engage in role play based on their first hand experiences, for example, cooking, looking after baby and shopping. Role play activities will often engage large groups of children working co-operatively. Staff supply different props upon request such as, till rolls. The children busily buy and sell their shop items before discovering that the till rolls make excellent 'spiders' webs'. Several children unravel a number of till rolls criss-crossing paths around the room, until the entire play space is adorned with the white paper decorations. Children regularly engage in musical activities. They sing and dance along to song tapes which they can play for themselves. They make music with the good range of musical instruments. They practise Christmas songs in preparation for the playgroup concert.

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

The provision is good.

All children, their parents and visitors are warmly welcomed by the friendly staff. This includes children with learning difficulties and disabilities, and also those for whom English is a second language. Children have use of good books and resources reflecting culture, race and disability. They learn about different cultures through themed activities to celebrate different religious festivals. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children have developed excellent relationships with their key carers and other staff. They are all settled and extremely happy. Most children are very confident and those with less confidence are nurtured by the adults caring for them. They receive excellent support and encouragement

and as a result children share their feelings and will try new things. Children play as individuals, with their friends and enthusiastically join in group activities. Children will often work co-operatively and show care and consideration for others.

The three and four-year-olds are well-behaved, polite and offer a warm welcome to visitors. Most children understand the behavioural expectations within the playgroup and follow instructions well. Others are helped to learn about what is expected, by the staff who remind children sensitively and in a way that continues to foster their self-esteem. Children feel good about themselves as they receive praise for good behaviour and for their achievements. Digital photographs are taken throughout each session and children proudly share photographs of themselves, with their peers, visitors and their parents or carers. The photographs capture children smiling proudly as they show off their work. They show expressions of awe and wonder as children experience new things and engage in creative play. As children prepare to move on to primary school a graduation ceremony is held. Children are presented with certificates linked to their individual achievements, in the presence of their parents and family members.

Children with learning difficulties and disability receive high quality support. The playgroup special educational needs co-ordinator is very experienced in the identification and support of children with special needs. She attends training to enhance her abilities to support all children and works closely with parents to ensure consistency of care. Individual education plans are implemented as appropriate and links with any professionals involved in the children's care established, successfully. As a result of the support given all children are fully included and are helped to meet their full potential.

Partnership with parents is good. Parents are greeted upon arrival and are encouraged to take an interest in what their children do at playgroup. The good partnership with parents contributes significantly to children's well-being and gives them the confidence to form secure and happy relationships with the staff. Parents find staff approachable and two-way communication is actively promoted. Parents receive verbal and written information about the playgroup and provision for funded nursery education. They receive an informative prospectus detailing many of the group's policies and procedures, including how a parental complaint would be handled. However, the complaints policy makes no mention of timescales for investigation of written complaints and reporting findings back to parents. Newsletters are sent out regularly, to notify parents about forthcoming events and planned themes. Before children start at the playgroup staff try to gather information from parents about the children, so that staff are aware of children's individual needs. Parents are given forms about 'my child at home' to fill in, but few do. Many parents are reluctant to help at playgroup to gain an insight into their children's learning. Photographs, uploaded onto the playgroup laptop provide a slide show of activities from previous sessions and many parents are keen to look at these with their children. They are also invited to look at their children's progress records as they wish. The written records themselves do not fully help parents to gain an understanding of where their children are in their learning or how they can contribute to their children's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The playgroup is well organised and the group's ethos is very much that the provision is child-centred and a fun, enjoyable place for children to play and learn. The rented hall that they use is transformed daily to provide a secure indoor play space where children can choose from a good range of activities. The outdoor garden is well used. Excursions into the local community and visitors invited into playgroup, enhance children's learning opportunities and

experiences. The activities planned are varied during the session and over the period of the week, to ensure that children are suitably occupied and stimulated. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the playgroup are good. The staff are passionate about their roles and clear about their responsibilities. They each have good access to training and are committed to their own personal development. The leaders compliment one another with their different expertise, qualifications and experience. Team spirit is very evident and all adults working with the group enjoy their work. The educational programme provides a wide range of experiences to enable children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff know the children very well. They exchange information daily and discuss individual progress. The system for recording assessment of children's progress is under development and parents would benefit from more clarity in the written documentation to enable them to get a clear picture of where their children are in their learning. The staff have limited success with current strategies to encourage parental involvement in children's learning and the ongoing assessment process. An informal system is used successfully to monitor the effectiveness of the provision and to identify areas for improvement. Staff value input from local advisors and support workers and are committed to improvement.

The group runs smoothly and all staff are clear about procedures to be followed to ensure the efficient and safe management of the provision and to promote the welfare, care and learning of all children. Documented policies and procedures do not always reflect the well-thought out processes followed. Records are clear and up-to-date and meet requirements of registration.

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

At the last inspection it was recommended that the playgroup extend their written risk assessment, to include risks arising in the garden and outside areas and any risks arising from activities. In respect of the educational aspect of the provision it was recommended that the group evaluate activities fully so it is clear if the learning intended has occurred. Also, to use evaluations and assessments of children's progress when planning for future activities, to ensure each child is encouraged to move on to the next stage of their development and that sufficient challenge is given for more able children.

In response to the recommendations made the group has extended their risk assessment accordingly and staff have attended a variety of training workshops in order to help them to use assessment and evaluation of activities more effectively. At the end of each session staff discuss and evaluate the activities offered. They also use their mental assessments of children's progress, sharing information between one another regularly. The information is relayed to key carers in order that progress records can be updated and used to inform future planning. This ensures that children are supported and challenged appropriately.

### **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 that documented policies and procedures reflect the good practice followed. Make sure that the child protection policy reflects local safeguarding children board procedures including action to be taken in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. Also extend the complaints procedure to include timescales

#### 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):

- consider additional ways to involve parents as part of the ongoing assessment process and to encourage them to take an interest in their children's learning

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)