

Busy Bees Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101780
Inspection date	14 September 2007
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	Castle Hill Primary School, Abbotswood Road, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4NX
Telephone number	01452 541183
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Registered person	Busy Bees Playgroup
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?

Busy Bees Playgroup opened in the 1980s. It operates from a room within Castle Hill Primary School in Brockworth and serves the local area. The playgroup opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00, Monday to Friday and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 13:00 until 15:10. All children use the school playgrounds.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 39 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with additional needs.

The playgroup employ five staff who work with the children, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The group receives support from a Foundation Stage consultant.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff demonstrate a good understanding of healthy eating and provide children with a varied range of snacks which help to develop their understanding of eating foods that are good for them. For example, a range of different fruits are offered with either toast, a plain biscuit or yoghurt. Children take an active part in preparing some of their snacks, such as making a sandwich or pizza. Water or milk are offered at snack times, although water is not always freely available to all children at other times during the session. Details of specific dietary needs are carefully recorded to ensure individual needs are met. Meal times are happy social occasions when children are encouraged to sit together with staff, sharing conversation and learning social skills. Children's awareness of healthy eating is further enhanced by growing and eating some of their own fruit and vegetables.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating and after messy play or using the toilet. They manage their own personal care well and have independent access to toilets and sinks. Photographs displayed above the sinks help children to learn how to wash their hands effectively. Staff maintain accident and medication records well and have received first aid training, helping to ensure that children are cared for appropriately if they have an accident or become unwell. Children are provided with good role models by staff who pay close attention to basic hygiene practices such as wiping tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to eating, and reinforcing good hygiene such as not putting food back on the serving plate if they decide they do not want it.

Children's physical development is very well supported through a wide range of planned activities which assist in their small and large muscle development. They play outside each day using wheeled toys, a large climbing frame and role play areas. Inside they enjoy many activities which support their small muscle development, such as small construction, painting, drawing and dough. During bad weather children use the school hall for more robust physical activities and each day at circle time they stretch, wriggle and stamp prior to settling to the main focus of the day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup each day and staff prepare the room prior to children's arrival to enable them to go straight to their chosen activity. This helps children with the transition from parent or carer, to the group. The premises are clean, warm and well maintained. Children use the school hall, playground and field at varying times during the week.

Furniture, toys and equipment are in good repair and checked daily for safety. There are sufficient resources to ensure children are comfortable and can play and eat together, developing their social skills and helping them to make choices. Children can reach their toys and equipment easily and sit or lie comfortably to play and join in activities. Staff rotate toys and activities according to their plans for the day, helping to ensure children enjoy a varied range of experiences.

Children's safety is very well maintained. Security of the premises is effectively managed by staff, and children's attendance clearly recorded. Staff complete daily visual checks of all equipment and play areas, and regular detailed written risk assessments, help to highlight areas of potential hazard. Children's safety is further promoted because they practise regular emergency evacuation from the premises and understand simple safety rules such as holding on to a rope when walking to the playground.

Children's welfare is further promoted by staff sound knowledge and understanding of the group's child protection policy and procedures. Through discussion they demonstrate what they understand to be the signs and symptoms of abuse and describe the procedures they would use should concerns arise. All staff have attended safeguarding children training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a good range of activities throughout each session. Younger and new children to the setting are growing in confidence and in their relationships with each other and staff. This is because staff are supportive of their individual needs and enable them to settle in their own time. For example, a child who was very nervous of some dressing-up costumes, but clearly fascinated with them, was very well supported in his own decision making and eventually, happily and proudly, wore the costume. Children are learning to take turns at circle and other whole group activities such as snack time and outside play. They enjoy using a wide range of creative materials such as, pasta, paint, ice and dough and thoroughly enjoy role-play, all of which helps them to express their experiences and feelings in a variety of ways. All children are learning about making choices as they freely choose their activities and resources from those set out by staff each day. Later in the year these opportunities are extended through children helping to plan their time using photographs and a planning board to select their activities for the session.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters framework. This helps them to plan effectively to meet the needs of all children. Long term plans show that all areas of learning are covered and short term plans indicate specific activities for each day of the week. Daily informal observations are used to inform short term plans and staff adapt these to include extensions to meet children's specific learning needs. For example, if a child is very keen to play with cars, they are encouraged to create their own road map with chalk or paint. Children respond well to staff involvement in their play and learning, and are keen to show their work to key staff. A varied range of teaching styles are used to engage children's interest and staff pose questions to help them think about what they are doing, for example, 'what do you think is in the ice' and 'how does it feel to you'.

Many children recognise their printed name and some are starting to write them with letters mostly correctly formed. All children benefit from excellent opportunities to make marks in their play, either using chalks and paint, playing at the desk or 'writing' in their books. They have a clear understanding of print having meaning as they share stories with staff and each other. Children use language to organise their play in the role-play area, and at the time of inspection, were busy creating a supermarket bakery using trays of vinyl letters and numbers to represent small cakes and bread.

Children are developing mathematical concepts playing with, among other things, peg boards, singing number songs and building, using a variety of construction materials and sets. Staff introduce mathematical language throughout children's play, talking about things being bigger or smaller, heavy or light, and more or less than something. These activities help them to learn about the world around them. Children proudly answer when asked where they live and enjoy using the 'pointing stick' to show where on the map it is and where Scotland is. Their understanding of the wider world is effectively supported by planned topic work throughout the year.

Children are interested and motivated by their play and many are able to concentrate for extended periods of time, for example, at the collage table a child spent thirty minutes creating her picture which she proudly presented to the other children at circle time. They are confident and able to take risks in their play, for example, exploring the cubes of ice to discover what was inside and fascinated by what they discovered.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup each morning. They are well known by staff who efficiently record individual details and highlight specific needs to ensure these are met effectively. Children increase their knowledge of the local community through visits to the library bus, taking part in main school activities and visitors to the group, such as the road safety unit. Children celebrate a variety of festivals throughout the year, increasing their awareness of the wider world and different lifestyles. This awareness is positively reinforced through play with a varied range of multi-cultural resources such as, books, small world toys and dressing-up clothes. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of supporting children with additional needs.

Children are skilfully encouraged to be well behaved, for example, to share equipment and take turns in their play and activities. Staff ensure they are consistent in their expectations for behaviour and offer frequent, meaningful praise which is further enhanced with stickers and certificates. This positive approach effectively assists children in learning to manage their own behaviour. Inappropriate incidents are managed in a consistent and supportive way and shared with parents. Staff make excellent use of puppets and a persona doll to encourage children to care for each other, be kind, and help them understand why certain behaviours are not acceptable. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff are available each day to discuss children's activities and progress, and they organise an annual open evening for new parents. Parents are regularly reminded they may come to the staff at any time for information and support regarding their children's learning and development. They are encouraged to take part in group sessions by helping on a rota basis. Regular newsletters help to inform them of group activities. However, information about the Foundation Stage curriculum does not fully explain how it is used to help children progress according to their individual needs, and ways to include parents who are unable to support the rota, are limited. Discussion with parents and the results of a recent questionnaire sent to them, demonstrates good support for the playgroup, although one or two expressed a wish for more information about their children's activities.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and Management of the playgroup is good. Children's care and well being is effectively supported by organised and caring staff and the committee of parents. All required policies and procedures are in place and available at the time of the inspection. Good regard is given to keeping children's records and personal information confidential. Weekly planning meetings and monthly committee meetings assist in keeping staff motivated, and the playgroup leader and her deputy provide very positive role models for staff and parents.

The playgroup's recruitment, induction and training programme is robust and annual staff appraisals highlight ongoing staff development needs. All recommendations from the last inspection have been fully addressed. Staff organise a variety of activities each day and rotate resources to provide a good balance of opportunities for children. The range of different sessions offered enables staff to focus effectively on preparing older children for the move to main stream schooling and those for younger children help them to settle happily into the group. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Care

At the last inspection the group agreed to ensure that supervisors achieved a Level 3 qualification and all children were appropriately challenged according to their varying abilities. They also agreed to update policies and procedures in line with the National Standards.

The group have made good progress with each of these recommendations. The playgroup leader and her deputy both have Level 3 qualifications. This helps them to plan a wide and varied range of activities that offer appropriate challenges to children in their care. Policies and procedure documents have been updated and now meet the National Standards. This helps to ensure that staff and parents are correctly informed about the groups approach to children's care.

Education

At the last inspection the group agreed to improve challenges for more able children and provide greater opportunities for them to initiate activities and select resources. They also agreed to make better use of observations and assessments to assist in planning.

Good progress has been made with each of these recommendations. Staff use assessments and observations to identify each child's individual learning needs and differentiate within activities to meet those needs, to help children move on from what they already know and can do. Children have many good opportunities to select resources and initiate activities, such as developing role play into a supermarket bakery, following group discussion about where we buy our food. When children are fully settled in the group they take an active role in planning their activities using photographs and a planning board.

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.

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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 all children may freely access fresh drinking water during their time at playgroup.

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):

- ensure parents fully understand the Foundation Stage curriculum and offer them suggestions about how they may support their children's development at home, to enable them to take a more active part 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