

St Peters Busy Bee's Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127621
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Inspector	Virginia Cooper
Setting Address	Button Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8NJ
Telephone number	07944 275459
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Registered person	St Peters Busy Bee's Pre-School
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Peter's Pre-School (Busy Bees) opened in 1985. The pre-school is a committee run provision and operates from St Peter's church hall in Bearsted. There is a small, grassed outside space. The pre-school serves the local area and children attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open four days a week during school term times from 09.15 to 12.00.

There are currently 26 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. The pre-school is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Four hold appropriate early years qualifications. The pre-school is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from a special needs advisor and a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy premises that are bright, welcoming and maintained to a good standard of hygiene and cleanliness. Staff teach children good hygiene procedures through the daily routine, for example, they remind them to wash their hands after using the lavatory and to cover their mouths when they cough. They provide tissues, soap and paper towels to help prevent cross infection. However, children do not routinely wash their hands before they eat at snack time.

Staff do not care for children who are contagious ensuring others are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst in their care are comforted and made comfortable, until their parents are able to collect them. The staff has not recently had to administer any medication to children. They understand, however, the correct procedures and have the necessary record book available should the situation arise.

There is always one member of staff present who has a current first aid qualification; there is a first aid kit that they check and replenish as necessary. They are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. Records are made of any accidents to children and parents sign the entry ensuring they are well informed about what has happened to their child.

Staff do not take full advantage of the outdoor play area; children only play outside in the fresh air when the weather is fine because they do not bring alternative footwear to enable them to go outside if the grass is damp. In inclement weather they undertake physical activities indoors ensuring they get plenty of exercise.

Children are currently undertaking a project about healthy eating; they make fruit smoothies and staff have an interest table where children can closely examine different fruits and vegetables. Staff discuss with children which foods are most healthy. Children eat fruit at snack time encouraging children to adopt a healthy diet. Children cannot access drinks independently throughout the session, although staff will always get them a drink if they ask. They have a choice of squash, milk and water to drink at snack time ensuring they do not become dehydrated. Staff sometimes undertake tasks children can easily manage, for example, pouring their own drink, which is not promoting their independence.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are secure and only staff open the door to parents, children and visitors. Parents come right into the room when they collect their children ensuring they are collected safely. Staff organise the room to provide areas for role play, relaxation and more structured activities. Child sized furniture helps children manage tasks more easily.

Children choose what they want to play with from a range of toys that staff check regularly to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child.

Staff check the premises before each session to ensure required safety equipment is in place, for example, socket covers. Children are reminded how to behave to keep themselves safe, for example, not to run around indoors unless during an organised game. This is beginning to help them understand about taking personal responsibility for their own safety. Children's safety

in the event of a fire is considered. Staff carry out and record regular fire drills to effect a quick evacuation in an emergency.

Staff report they have had difficulty accessing courses; no staff have updated their training to help them safeguard children for approximately five years, although they hope to attend a course this autumn. They understand the signs and symptoms of abuse and the group's policies and procedures make clear the procedure to take if they have concerns about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a free play session every morning; they can choose what they want to play with from the selection of table top and floor activities the staff provide. Staff choose activities that provide varying amounts of challenge for children, for instance, the puzzle table has jigsaws ranging from very easy to quite complex. Children's level of involvement is far greater during the free play activities than the large group and key worker activities. The large group activities hold less appeal; for example, when children all sing together at registration time, whilst most join in with the actions not many are actually singing and some children are disengaged. They do however sit patiently until they are instructed to do something else. Key worker sessions are frequently based upon work sheets rather than experiential learning. Children are more animated when they undertake activities where they take a more active role, for instance, they love to cook; they take turns to break eggs and stir the mixture and are very proud of the cakes they make. Staff appreciate that children love to make models from recycled materials and they understand what children learn and benefit from this activity. However, staff rarely include this in the plans because the feedback from parents has not been positive about this activity.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff deliver activities that cover all six areas of learning, however, there is an over emphasis on recognising colours, simple shapes, numbers, letters and preparation for school. Children are well supported by staff when they undertake free play activities; they chat with them and through discussion extend their knowledge, for example, a member of staff explains the purpose of a diary as children play offices. Staff are very kind to children who are finding learning more difficult, they recognise children's achievements and give them lots of praise and encouragement to help them participate. Some children's assessment records have had little added to them in over a year, and this suggests that they have made little progress over that time. There is quite a lot of information in children's assessment records about what the staff deliver and what children might gain from this but the information is general and does not give parents any idea of how their child in particular is progressing. Staff lack experience of how to use observations and assessment records to help them plan activities that build upon what the children already know and can do. Whilst the record keeping is not thorough staff do have a fair idea of the areas children are currently learning. Due to much of what they know about the children is committed to memory rather than in their assessment records appropriate challenges and the areas to explore next are not always identified in a formal or consistent way. If staff leave the provision this information is lost.

Children's levels of confidence are variable; some are confident enough to share their news at registration time but others are reluctant to speak publicly. They are able to sit quietly when appropriate and their behaviour is good. Children's independence is fostered in some ways and not in others. Staff encourage their personal independence, for example, taking themselves to

the lavatory and they all tidy up helping them take responsibility. However, they can only access the art and craft resources and tools that staff choose to put out and they are not able to freely access drinks throughout the session without asking a member of staff.

Children have the opportunity to recognise their names every session at snack time, most children manage this easily. Children recognise which letter begins their name and they are beginning to learn the sounds different letters make. Children's pencil control is well practised and some children are beginning to write recognisable letters. Staff suggest children write their own name on their work if they can do this. Staff encourage children to have a love of books; they often have a story at registration time and they are beginning to appreciate that books are for finding information as well as pleasure, because staff use books effectively to support current learning themes.

Most children competently count up to ten; a lot of them can recognise written numerals. Staff take opportunities during the morning to help children make simple calculations. Staff check regularly that children recognise the properties of simple shapes like circles, squares, triangles and rectangles. Children learn the significance of measurement through activities like cooking. Puzzles help children develop their spatial awareness. Teaching children their colours is undertaken in a very formal way; this is a regular key worker activity.

Children are currently learning about healthy foods. As part of this project they are growing vegetables encouraging their interest in nature. A member of staff brings in vegetables from her garden in their natural state for children to examine, cut up and then make into vegetable soup. This helps children understand how they can produce a meal from raw materials. Children rarely plan, design and make a self chosen project. They rarely need to make their own decisions, after experimentation about which materials and tools are the most appropriate to use. This is because staff tend to provide everything they think children will need. Children have access to some programmable toys where they can explore how things work and begin to understand cause and effect. Children celebrate a variety of festivals and are beginning to learn about their own and other people's cultures and beliefs.

Children are developing spatial awareness through activities like travelling through, over and under various climbing equipment and regular music and movement sessions. They play safely moving around without bumping into one another. Children's fine motor skills are encouraged through the regular use of hand held tools; most use scissors very competently. They enjoy shaping and moulding malleable materials using a variety of tools.

Children undertake creative musical activities; a peripatetic music teacher regularly visits and teaches music and movement. Staff sing with children but not all children join in enthusiastically. Staff are careful about the amount of messy play activities that are offered because of the time it takes to dry paintings and parent feedback. However, children love to paint when they do have the opportunity. Staff always choose which colours the children will use which is not encouraging their artistic talents. Staff role play with children, for example, playing offices, shops and doctors enabling them to act out and learn about the world about them.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are familiar with the routine helping them feel secure. Staff are kind and caring in their interactions; when children approach them to talk, they listen to them carefully. All children have access to resources that reflect diversity positively. Staff sometimes, however, express

stereotypical views; they have strong beliefs that children from the same family will behave similarly to their older siblings resulting in them having pre-determined expectations. The children enjoy a routine that allows them to be active and relax throughout the day. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are aware that some children may have learning difficulties and can identify children who may need additional help. The member of staff nominated as the special educational needs co-ordinator writes individual education plans for children that identify suitable and achievable targets. Staff are willing to implement programmes set by other agencies like speech and language activities.

Children behave well, staff notice when children are good and praise them, encouraging desirable behaviour. Staff are good role models; they always speak calmly to children. Children are able to work co-operatively with one another; they play imaginary games with the cars and play road together.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. The policies and procedures are always available for parents to read. They have contact with the staff each day and communicate easily with them. Staff obtain information from parents about children's development when they first attend; however, there is no consistent method of parents contributing to their child's records after this time. Some of the information in children's assessment records is general and does not relate specifically to the individual child's progress towards the early learning goals. The pre-school have not received any complaints but staff are aware of the latest legislation requiring them to keep a record if this occurs in the future.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The supervisor takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group. The group operate a key worker system; whilst staff know the children well they are not making best use of assessment records to inform future planning. They experiment with different ways to record children's progress, but have not yet found a system they are entirely comfortable using. The pre-school has policies and procedures that are always available for parents to read. The recruitment procedure is robust and all staff hold a current criminal records check; two members of staff hold an up-to-date first aid certificate. Staff meetings are held regularly and they use these meetings to discuss children's progress. Staff have experienced difficulty accessing courses to update their knowledge.

The daily programme begins every day with a free play session; children choose freely what they want to play with from a variety of age appropriate toys that keep them amused. The staff chat with the children as they play and its encouraging their communication skills. They have opportunities to play with adult support and to play independently. The setting meets the needs of the range children for whom it provides.

All mandatory documentation is in place, for example, details about the children, accident records and records for the administration of medication. The registration certificate is displayed, ensuring parents are well informed. Staff appreciate and understand the importance of confidentiality.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection three recommendations were made that relate to Standard 6, Standard 12 and Standard 13.

The pre-school were asked to ensure the complaints policy states that parents can take their concerns to Ofsted as the regulator; ensure records of accidents are well maintained and ensure the Child Protection policy covers the procedure to be followed should a member of staff be accused of abusing a child at the pre-school.

The Child Protection policy has been amended to include procedures to follow if a member of staff should be accused of abusing a child at pre-school and accident records are suitably maintained. The recommendation about the complaints procedure is only partially addressed. The role of the registering authority is mentioned but Ofsted is not named and no phone number for Ofsted is included. This was discussed with the supervisor who agreed to update the policy.

At the last education inspection three key issues were identified. The pre-school were asked to organise large group sessions to ensure this includes daily routines that extend learning for more able children and build on what children know; develop the assessment process to show how children are attaining the stepping stones and ensure that parents are involved in this process and improve the book corner to make this an attractive quiet area where children can enjoy exploring books.

Of the three key issues only one has been addressed completely; the book corner has a soft seating, a mat, table and chairs making it a more attractive area.

Staff still have difficulties with the organisation of large group activities and recording and using assessment records to best effect. Therefore two recommendations after this inspection relate to children's involvement [partly relates to large group activities] and staff understanding of the assessment cycle.

The level of improvement made after the recommendations set at the last inspection has been variable. Staff understand that to improve the outcomes for children and to have a significant impact upon their care and education the recommendations need to be addressed fully. The supervisor says that she intends to seek help from the local authority.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 wash their hands before eating their snack and encourage their independence by allowing them to access and pour their own drinks
- monitor all children's well-being and level of involvement; in particular consider what benefit each activity holds for the individuals undertaking the task

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):

- record children's progress in all six areas of learning more regularly and use these assessment records to help plan activities that address children's individual learning needs; in particular improve the opportunities for children to have easy access to a good range of art and craft materials and tools to enable them to design and make self chosen projects
- keep parents regularly informed about their children's progress towards the early learning goals. Provide them with more opportunities to share what they know about their child, and encourage them to be involved with their child's learning

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