

Barn Owls Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	131527
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Inspector	Tonia Chilcott

Setting Address	Old Pavilion, Pirrie Park Bowling Club, 78a Wilton Crescent, Upper Shirley, Southampton, Hampshire, SO15 7QE
Telephone number	07799 104518
E-mail	
Registered person	Jacqui Doswell
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?

Barn Owls Preschool opened in 1998 and operates from a hall in the pavilion of a local bowling club. It is situated in the Shirley area of Southampton.

A maximum of 18 children may attend the preschool at any one time. The preschool is open each weekday from 09:00 until 11:30 during term time only. All children share access to an outdoor play area. There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. The preschool supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language. The preschool employs five members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are generally well protected from the spread of illness and infection by staff, who effectively implement and follow written procedures well. Children learn to follow simple good health and hygiene practices throughout everyday activities and are gently reminded by staff to wash their hands at appropriate times during the session. For example, staff gently remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet, and children learn to wipe their hands with individual wipes before eating. Children take it in turns to help staff, and one another, with hand washing before snack time, on a daily basis. They encourage one another to wash their hands with the wipes and then remind the remainder of the group to dispose of the soiled wipes in the bin provided; consequently reinforcing their learning of good personal hygiene practices.

Children receive appropriate care in the event of an accident or injury whilst at the setting as all staff have completed relevant first aid training; a fully stocked first aid kit is in place, and the contents reviewed and replenished on a regular basis. Staff have a secure understanding of the procedures to follow if an accident occurs, although occasionally, details of accidents are not recorded promptly as they occur. Staff obtain permission in writing from parents to seek emergency treatment or advice, ensuring that children receive appropriate treatment in the event of an emergency.

Children's health and dietary needs are well met by staff who work well with parents to gather information about the children's individual needs, thus ensuring that all snacks meet the needs of all children. Effective systems are in place to ensure that tables and food preparation surfaces are cleaned before accessed by children. Children eagerly take responsibility for cleaning the tables themselves, wiping them carefully with antibacterial wipes before they all sit down to eat. They then confidently choose which snack they wish to have, serving themselves with support from staff if needed.

Children regularly take part in physical activities both inside and outside of the setting. They learn to recognise the changes that occur to their body after exercising. After running and jumping, children talk to staff about how their heart is beating faster. Some children confidently use alternate steps whilst climbing on the climbing frame and enjoy a range of activities that enable them to balance and jump. Children regularly access a range of tools and materials that enable further development of their hand / eye co-ordination. For example, staff support and encourage children whilst using scissors in art and craft activities, noting the children's clear achievement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. Staff work exceptionally hard to ensure that the building is welcoming to both parents and children at the setting. Children's work is displayed imaginatively and widely around the setting; celebrating and valuing the children's achievements and contributing to the welcoming environment. Highly vigilant staff ensure that the building remains secure throughout the sessions, effectively implementing written procedures that are shared with parents. Staff ensure that all areas that are accessible to children are free from hazards throughout. Methodical visual risk assessments are completed

on a daily basis by staff, to ensure that all areas are safe, and action is taken promptly to remove any hazards.

Children learn to keep themselves safe whilst undertaking regular fire drills with staff. Staff are highly effective in planning fire drills to ensure that all children regularly take part. Robust systems are implemented by all staff to ensure that fire exits remain unobstructed throughout the session, thus allowing children to safely leave the building in the event of an emergency. Clear procedures for the arrival and departure of children are followed rigorously by staff to ensure that children enter and leave the setting safely with a responsible adult.

Children access an extensive range of toys and materials that are safe, clean and suitable for children of all ages. Space is used particularly well to ensure that children are able to play freely and safely with the toys of their choice during free play activities. Toys and materials are well maintained and presented very well to children.

Children benefit from the staff team's secure and thorough understanding of child protection procedures. All staff have undertaken training relating to child protection, either taking part in formal courses or in house training to ensure that all are fully aware of their responsibilities. Information and posters are displayed prominently both within the setting and in information provided to parents, thus ensuring that parents are fully aware of the role of the childcare staff. To ensure that staff remain fully up to date and confident in their ability to protect children, information relating to child protection procedures features regularly at team meetings and within individual staff operational files.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time at the preschool. Highly effective procedures are in place to ensure that children settle quickly when they start at the preschool. Parents are provided with a comprehensive pack of information and resources that contribute towards the settling in procedures. For instance, children become familiar with some of the routines of the setting as parents are provided with examples of children's name cards to use in the home environment, that match those used in the preschool. Children arrive at the setting happy and keen to join in with the activities available, quickly finding their friends.

All children benefit from the extensive range of toys and materials available, all of which are used well by staff to extend and support children's learning. Staff interact with children exceptionally well, taking time to listen and talk to the children, and often laughing and joking with them. Consequently, children laugh and giggle throughout the session. Staff know all the children very well and consequently ensure that the individual needs of all children are met.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have an exceptionally good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan and provide a well balanced curriculum that supports children's progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are highly skilled at questioning and extending children's learning, adapting activities to suit the individual child adeptly. They spend time observing the children and recording details of their achievements and use the information gained to identify the children's next steps in learning. Consequently, staff know the children exceptionally well and are fully able to extend every day activities to meet the needs of all

children. Staff make good use of time and resources throughout most of the session, and generally, large group activities maintain children's interest.

All staff engage effectively with the children and have developed good relationships that allow them to support and extend children's learning. Staff work very well together as a team, sharing information and reviewing one another's own practice on a regular basis. The effective sharing of information at regular team meetings ensures that staff all remain fully aware of the planned learning outcome of activities, and how individual children can be extended further. All staff are fully committed to improvement and as such eagerly seek further advice and training on a regular basis.

Children are very happy and enjoy their time at the preschool. Children concentrate very well during self chosen and some adult led activities, displaying good levels of involvement and concentration. For instance, many children engage for long periods of time in imaginative play. Some pretend to be at home getting ready to go to the Royal Ball. They put the children to bed and then get dressed up in bright clothes and dresses available, before telling staff that they need to write some invitations, as they need to be invited to the ball. Some then use writing for different purposes and write lists and invitations for one another. Other children dress up as builders, using the tools to measure and then repair the play house, talking to staff about how big the door is and why it needs fixing. Their play is only stopped when it is time to tidy up before large group activities begin.

Children show extremely high levels of confidence and eagerly engage in conversations with one another and staff. They ask questions and are eager to learn. When looking at dried flowers with staff, children ask questions about the leaves and flowers, using magnifying glasses to look closely at the differences between the leaves and flowers with staff. Children eagerly take part in activities to practise their emergent writing skills through the session, both during planned and some spontaneous activities. Whilst completing tasks with staff, children attempt to write their names in a variety of ways. Some trace their names using tracing paper, whilst others are fully able to form recognisable letters, whilst being gently encouraged to try by staff. Children know that text carries meaning and talk to staff about the writing on the lolly pop people's sign can be read by cars behind and in front. They choose to colour in pictures, concentrating for long periods telling adults that they have covered all the white bits.

Children count confidently both in free play situations and during group activities with staff. They eagerly count one another and some show interest in number problems when talking to staff about how many more circles are needed to make sure that all children have one. Many are able to confidently name the number that is one more or one less than a given number. For instance, some eagerly shout out to staff that 13 comes after 12. Children behave exceptionally well and understand the routines of the setting well. Most engage happily in tidying up before large group activities and encourage those that are trying to complete activities to come and help as well. Children share and take turns whilst playing in free play activities such as sand play. They patiently wait to use the sieves for instance, allowing others time to finish using them first.

Many children confidently name a wide range of colours and shapes. Whilst painting pictures of Elmer, children talk to staff about all the different colours. They tell staff how they can identify the white paint on the white paper by the texture left by the paint on the paper. Many begin to recognise the sounds of letters, linking the sound to the written letter. Many eagerly tell staff that Elmer begins with e for instance. Children enjoy talking about the weather on a

daily basis. They use props to record on the weather tree what the weather is like and then work out how many times it has rained within the last month with staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff have a sound understanding of equal opportunities and ensure that all children are treated as individuals. Time is spent getting to know the children, their families, their likes and dislikes, ensuring that staff are able to plan a range of activities that take into account the interests of the children. Staff work in close partnership with parents to ensure that the needs of the children are met. Children settle well and feel valued as staff build strong links with home, getting to know the children and families well. Comprehensive information is gathered from the children's parents before they commence at the preschool to ensure that staff are fully aware of and able to meet the needs of the children immediately. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and / or disabilities are strongly supported. Staff have a sound understanding of the Code of Practice and have developed comprehensive systems to ensure that the needs of children are met. The preschool's two Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO's) attend suitable training and ensure that this is shared with all staff, ensuring that all have a clear understanding of the setting's role. Children benefit from the systems to ensure that, at all times, there is a SENCO working directly with children. Children behave exceptionally well in response to praise and encouragement from staff, subsequently, children use the same praise when playing imaginatively together. Children enjoy receiving imaginative stickers to acknowledge and reward good behaviour. Staff spend time developing and printing a range of different stickers, to ensure that all children are able to receive an appropriate reward throughout the sessions. Clear rules and boundaries are implemented consistently across the sessions. Staff are all positive role models, helping the children to work together and to learn to use toys and resources well. For instance children eagerly help staff to tidy up, carefully putting toys away.

All children benefit greatly from the strong relationships that are developed between their parents and staff. A thorough and well thought out settling in procedure ensures that both children and parents feel comfortable when first attending the setting. A comprehensive information pack is provided to parents, alongside a book that contains photos and explanations of what children are doing throughout the daily routine. Parents are encouraged to sit with their child to look at the pictures, to ensure that children are familiar with the preschool's routines before attending.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents receive detailed and comprehensive information about the setting and the curriculum, including details relating to the Foundation Stage. Parents are involved in their children's learning as they are kept informed about topics and themes and their children's development, many having seen their children flourish whilst at the setting. Parents are provided with information and ideas about activities that can be completed at home with their children. For example, parents found that the carrot top activity, enabled them to encourage their child's learning at home, and reinforced their understanding of how activities can develop their child's learning. Parents find staff friendly and approachable and have many opportunities to contribute to both the development of their child and the preschool as a whole. Parents' opinions are regularly sought through verbal discussion and written comments sheets and their opinions valued and welcomed.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are confident and settled within the well organised environment. Staff make good use of the available space and resources to ensure that children are able to play freely and safely whilst being continually supervised and supported, although at times, some large group activities do not fully engage all children. Staff deployment is effective in ensuring that children are fully supported and supervised throughout the session. Staff are enthusiastic and encourage children to take part in activities throughout the session.

The staff team are suitably experienced to work with children, with an exceptionally high level of staff being fully qualified; they are fully committed to updating and furthering their knowledge and skills and regularly seek and attend training and take part in new initiatives. Effective procedures for the appointment of staff and a thorough induction programme are in place. All required documentation is in place, and is stored securely thus maintaining confidentiality, although occasionally some records are not completed promptly. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The management team ensure that all staff are able to share ideas and contribute to the planning and evaluation of activities, one another and the setting as a whole. Regular assessment of the curriculum ensures that the staff and manager are able to identify fully, areas of strength and areas for development within the setting, consequently allowing the staff team to identify resources and training to continue to improve. The manager and staff work very well together as a team and demonstrate a high commitment to continually develop and improve children's care and education. This is achieved through regular training, effective links with other agencies such as the Preschool Learning Alliance and participation in the Flying High accreditation scheme.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the setting was asked to ensure that blanket consent to administer non prescription medication is removed from consent forms. It is now the preschools policy to only administer prescribed medication to children, with written permission and instruction from parents, ensuring that children continue to only receive prescribed medication.

At the last nursery education inspection, no recommendations were made, although the setting was asked to give consideration to ensuring that children are fully independent during routine activities such as snack time. Staff have made changes to snack time and evaluated the progress made. Children now have more independence and confidently choose and select their own snack from the range provided. The setting was also asked to give consideration to ensuring that necessary staff access SENCO training, to enable them to provide the highest level of support for all children. Children now benefit from the support of two members of staff who have completed the required training and shared the information with the remaining staff, thus ensuring that all children are supported fully.

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):

- consider the arrangements for hand washing, with particular regard to the sharing of water bowls after messy play, to further protect children from the spread of infection
- ensure that accidents involving children are recorded promptly.

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):

- review the organisation of the sessions and large group activities to provide children with more freedom of choice.

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