

Burham Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	127063
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Inspector	Lara Hickson
Setting Address	Burham Village Hall, Rochester Road, Burham, Rochester, Kent, ME1 3SH
Telephone number	01634 864664
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Registered person	Burham 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

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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?

Burham Pre-School Playgroup has been registered since 1972. It operates from Burham Village Hall in Burham, Rochester and has sole use of the setting during hours of operation. It has access to a kitchen, an outside play area and sole use of toilet facilities. The pre-school generally serves families from the local area.

The setting opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 9.15 to 11.45 although the group operates a whole day session on a Monday from 09:15 until 14:50. A maximum of 26 children from two-years-and-six months to five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 21 children on roll who attend for a variety of sessions. This includes 18 three and four year children who receive funded nursery education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties/disabilities and English as an additional language.

There are seven staff that work with the children and four of these have early years qualifications. Five members of staff hold a valid paediatric first aid qualification which includes training in first aid for babies and children. The setting receives support from a teacher from

the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, well maintained and clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene. Staff check the premises prior to the children's arrival, during each session and at the end of each session and understand that keeping the premises clean and hygienic helps to prevent the spread of infection. Effective procedures are in operation to protect children from the risk of infection because the pre-school does not accept children when they are unwell and this is outlined clearly in the written sickness policy. Children are encouraged to develop independent hygiene practices, for example, they are able to access and use the toilet independently as equipment such as step up stools are in place to support them. Children also independently wash their hands prior to snack time and help themselves to tissues, disposing of these hygienically once they have completed their task.

Children's individual dietary requirements are clearly recorded on enrolment forms and contain information regarding food intolerances, allergies or special dietary requirements. A food and drink policy reflects the setting's commitment towards meeting children's individual dietary requirements. Each child has a placemat for snacktime, and as well as their name and a photo, it clearly highlights any dietary requirements. Children are offered a wide range of nutritious, healthy options at snack time and a snack rota is in place to ensure that different options are offered at each session. For example, fresh fruit, raw vegetables, yoghourts, cheese and biscuits and sandwiches are offered to the children. Children have independent access to fresh drinking water throughout each session which enables them to become aware of their own physical needs. However, at snack time children are offered a choice of fresh milk, juice or water to drink but staff pour these out for the children. Staff use disposable gloves and wipe clean aprons when preparing the children's snacks.

Children are offered daily opportunities for fresh air and exercise in the outside play area and play staff plan daily activities which incorporate physical skills, for example, running, climbing, jumping and throwing. During the drier months there is a free flow play system between the inside and outside area which extends the children's learning further. Fine motor development skills are enhanced through playing on the computer moving different arrows around to complete an activity, fixing together construction equipment and puzzles and using a range of tools with the playdough. Staff also introduce children to different tools during craft activities, for example, toothbrushes, large shaped sponges and paintbrushes. This effectively encourages and promotes their physical development.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The pre-school setting is organised extremely well to enable children to move around safely and independently. Security is excellent and systems are in place to prevent the children from leaving the nursery unsupervised and unauthorised persons from gaining entry. Arrival and collection procedures further enhance children's safety, for example, a member of staff is placed at the main door during these times and a password system is in place for emergencies with clear guidelines to parents on this additional security measure. Staff check the identification

of all visitors and a visitors book is in place to monitor adults on the premises. There is a policy on uncollected/lost children. Staff greet children and parent/carers individually into the pre-school and are warm and welcoming.

Children have independent access to a range of toys, resources and equipment. Staff ensure that these resources are safe and hygienic for the children to use through regular cleaning routines and checks. Resources available are age and stage appropriate and conform to British Safety Standards. Staff set out activities attractively in clearly defined areas of learning prior to the children's arrival. The outside area is used daily and is a safe, secure, enclosed area which provides opportunities for physical play as well as extending learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Staff complete daily risk assessments to ensure that the setting, both the indoor and outside areas, are safe and secure for children. There are clear procedures in place to promote children's safety in the event of a fire or emergency situation. Fire doors are clearly marked and unobstructed, a fire blanket is mounted in the kitchen area, fire extinguishers and equipment are checked annually and smoke detectors and fire fighting appliances conform to British Standard European Number standards. Fire drills are completed every half term and full details are recorded.

Children are protected from abuse and neglect because staff have a very good knowledge of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures. This promotes the safety and welfare of the children. Staff can identify the possible signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and understand the referral procedures. A member of staff is designated as having overall responsibility for child protection and ensures that staff have up-to date training. A comprehensive child protection policy is in place which clearly outlines the referral process and includes the procedure to follow if an allegation is made against staff. Children are protected well from people who have not been vetted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children separate well from their parent/carers and are eager to explore the wide range of activities and resources available. Children are able to independently access activities from the range set out prior to their arrival and a system is in place for children to choose additional resources from a visual book showing extra resources and activities that are available. Children play well together in small groups with their peers and are able to share and take turns. They demonstrate interest and curiosity in activities available and this is further extended through the open ended questioning techniques of staff. The staff team are caring and responsive to the children's individual needs, particularly when settling new children and with children who have difficulties and/or disabilities. Children form good relationships with staff who sit with them during activities and encourage their play and learning opportunities. Staff interaction with the children is very good and they use effective techniques to extend the children's understanding and play opportunities.

The staff team demonstrate a good understanding of the individual needs of the children attending the pre-school. Staff plan activities using the Birth to three matters framework for younger children, demonstrating a positive approach to implementing this to ensure their needs are fully met. The Foundation Stage is used to plan for the older children and staff show a good understanding of this framework. Although staff discuss children's care and background with

their parent/carers prior to the children starting, there is no clear information about the children's 'starting points' which can be used to inform planning of future activities.

An effective keyworker system is in operation and ensures children are well supported within the setting. Key workers liaise with parents regularly and share information about the child's progress and development. Children's developmental progress is recorded either under the Birth to three matters framework or the stepping stones and is shared with the parents on a regular basis.

Children benefit from the structure of the pre-school session as the majority of the session is based on free play in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Children are able to play with minimal interruptions and the routines in place within the pre-school do not impinge on the children's play and enjoyment. For example, a snack bar system is in place allowing the children to choose when they would like a snack or drink without interfering with activities they are enjoying. Children are very happy, settled and occupied in their play.

Staff evaluate teaching methods weekly during their planning meeting and discuss how the week has gone and record any changes or alterations to the weekly plan. Planning is organised effectively to ensure all areas of learning receive equal emphasis. Planning clearly details what the children should be achieving, what resources are required, staff deployment and the activity planned. Pre-school prospectus provides information on the Foundation Stage and the Birth to three matters framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the Early Learning Goals and the stepping stones and use this in conjunction with their knowledge of the children when planning activities that will stimulate the children's enjoyment and learning. Staff provide opportunities to extend the learning of all children by using their observations to identify the next steps for each child. All staff are involved in planning and evaluate these at the end of each week to identify areas that have gone well and alterations that have been made to extend children's interest and learning. Each keyworker has responsibility for completing progress records for their identified group of children, although all staff observe children in the setting and pass these observations on to the specific keyworker. Staff provide children with a wide selection of activities, toys and equipment to meet their individual needs and these can be altered to meet the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A free flow play session is in operation for the majority of each session and staff encourage the children to move freely between activities and support them in the use of the resources.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. They arrive at the pre-school confidently, separate from their parents and settle into the pre-school routine. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and clear boundaries are in place which children know and understand. As a result behaviour is very good. The children are developing an awareness and understanding of the needs of others. They demonstrate a caring attitude towards each other and a willingness to help. For example, at tidy up time all of the children enthusiastically join in with tidying toys and resources away. One four year old was so keen that as soon as he heard the five minute warning before tidy up time he started putting away the dolls house. Children have good self care skills, for example, they take themselves to the toilet independently and they help themselves to water during the session.

Children demonstrate good listening skills, for example, they all sit and listen at registration time and are able to enjoy the group story session. Children have access to a wide range of books which are displayed attractively in the book area. Staff sit in this area and read stories to the children when requested and children enjoy looking through books independently. Children enjoy group stories and during a story 'One day in the jungle' they join in with reading the story enthusiastically and later pretend to be the different animals in the story. They giggled during aspects of the story as well as being able to retell the text. Children are encouraged to find their name cards during self registration when they first arrive to each session and again during the snack bar session. Children are beginning to associate names and objects with letters and sounds. One three year old was able to spell out the letters of her name to the inspector and used the keyboard to type the letters of her name out on the computer. Staff provide a range of writing equipment on the art and craft table and in the home corner which children use to write lists and make marks. Children understand that print has a meaning and enjoy the writing and drawing activities provided but do not extend the use of this skill in every day situations such as labelling their own craft creations and drawings.

Children have opportunities to explore weight and measure during water play and when experimenting with pulses in the sand tray. Staff introduce different mathematical concepts to the children, for example, floating and sinking. They are able to experiment with different objects to see if they will float or sink and staff encourage children to predict whether specific items will float or sink. A range of maths resources are available for children to explore, for example, coloured camels of different sizes for sorting and counting, a magnetic board with numbers and shapes of different colours, a metre and a half ruler for children to use when measuring. Staff are on hand to support the children explore various concepts. Many children can count reliably to 10 and can recognise and name numerals. When counting, staff help children to count carefully so that they can associate counting with an object rather than just by rote. The daily routine promotes maths and counting. For example, at registration time staff discuss how many children may participate in certain activities and show children laminated cards with numbers and objects depicting how many children may participate at any time. Many children identify the numbers and have the opportunity to count the number of smiley faces which represents the number able to play.

Children are able to experiment and operate simple equipment, for example, the pre-school computer, remote control toys, cassette recorders and calculators. Children confidently use the computer and although staff are on hand to support this if required many of the children are able to use it independently showing skill and dexterity with the mouse and arrow controls. Children have opportunities to experience and discover changes in the environment and nature as a result of their daily access to outdoor play. There are many opportunities for the children to learn about their local community, for example, they have had visits from the local police and fire service. Children have visited the post office, bought and posted letters in the post-box following an activity on making their own pictures postcards. Children participate in activities that help them to gain an understanding of the wider world. For example, they celebrate a number of different festivals throughout the year, such as Divali, Chinese New Year, the Tour de France and American Independence Day. There is a variety of resources such as dressing up clothes, dolls, cooking equipment from other cultures, books and small world people which help the children to develop their knowledge of diversity and disability.

Children are able to develop and enhance their hand/eye control and coordination through the range of physical activities available to enhance these skills. Staff encourage children to look at how balls move and introduce throwing and catching games. The children demonstrate good spatial awareness both inside the setting and in the outdoor area. They also move around the

pre-school setting and furniture confidently and safely. For example, staff organise throwing and catching games using balls of different sizes in the garden area such as piggy in the middle. Children are able to handle tools and equipment safely. The children are able to recognise changes in their bodies when they are active and how to keep themselves healthy.

Children have opportunities to develop their imagination in a range of role play and small world activities. They express themselves well through role play, for example, they dress up as doctors and nurses and make the dolls and each other better using the pretend first aid kits. Children are able to explore media and materials and they show great pride in their achievements. For example, one child paraded her handprints around the room to show her peers and staff members. A range of different malleable experiences are provided regularly, for example, shaving foam, jelly, cornflakes, gloop and playdough. Children enjoy planned musical activities and have the opportunity to experiment with a selection of different instruments and sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The pre-school team demonstrate a very good understanding of children's individual needs and requirements. They work in partnership with parent/carers to ensure that children's needs are met. Child record forms are completed thoroughly by keyworkers for each child upon entry to the setting. These contain all of the required information to meet individual needs and for staff to provide appropriate care. A list of each child's individual dietary needs is displayed in the kitchen and information is recorded on individual placemats to ensure that their individual requirements are met. There is photographic evidence that children have looked at some different festivals and celebrations.

The pre-school ensures all children are welcomed into the setting and supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a designated Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in place, who has attended relevant training and liaises closely with the Area SENCO to provide support and guidance to parents if required. Staff make regular observations of children's development and Individual Educational plans are drawn up by the SENCO with parents to set out short term goals for a child. Any concerns identified are sensitively shared with parents, and external support is sought. Systems are in place to support children with English as an additional language.

Behaviour is good and children demonstrate care and consideration towards each other. Staff provide positive role models for the children and encourage them to share, take turns and play cooperatively together. The setting has clear boundaries which the children are aware of and follow. A set of simple rules is displayed on a board through words and picture signs to ensure that all children understand them. Staff have realistic expectations of the children's behaviour according to their individual age, stage of development and level of understanding. Children receive gentle reminders regarding inappropriate behaviour and praise and encouragement for their positive behaviour. This ensures that self esteem and confidence is enhanced and encourages children to behave well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is very good. All parents approached reported that they are extremely happy with the care and learning provided by the pre-school staff. They felt that the staff team are caring, approachable and supportive of their children's individual needs. One parent/carer said 'staff have bent over backwards to accommodate my child'. The pre-school prospectus offers comprehensive information about the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage as well as useful information about the pre-school including the routines of

the setting. Parents are given written information regarding the Early Learning Goals and receive regular newsletters informing them of the proposed termly activities. There are effective opportunities for parents to share records and receive information about their child's progress and development on a regular, informal basis. Parents can see their child's developmental records at any time and staff are happy to set aside time to talk to them. Staff are also available to speak to parents at the beginning and end of each session. A record of transfer is completed when each child goes to school highlighting the stage where each child is at.

Parents are also asked to complete questionnaires on a regular basis and the pre-school takes comments from these into consideration when evaluating the provision. A settling-in policy is in place and aims to make the setting as warm and inviting as possible and help all children and families feel safe and comfortable within the setting as quickly as possible. Settling-in sessions are arranged prior to each child's start date to enable the child and their parents to familiarise themselves within the setting. These are individual to a child's needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The pre-school displays their registration certificate on the notice board in the foyer. The attendance register is taken when the children arrive to each session and clearly records arrival and departure times where different to the start and finish time of the setting. For example, when two children arrive late to the session their arrival time is clearly recorded in the register.

Children are cared for by a consistent, experienced team of staff who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. There is a clear management structure in place. All staff have or are working towards qualifications and the pre-school has effective systems for vetting all staff. The pre-school staff are deployed effectively throughout each session to ensure that the children are safe and well supervised. They interact very well with the children during activities, extending their play and learning through open ended questioning. Staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the pre-school and work extremely well together as a team, encouraging and supporting each other. For example, staff have designated responsibilities for certain areas such as SENCO, Child Protection Officer, Health and Safety Officer and Equal Opportunities. There is a designated deputy and contingency plans are in place regarding sickness. The pre-school work to a high staff/child ratio which ensures that all children receive excellent support and attention. A staff deployment plan is in place and this is assessed at termly meetings taking into account ratios, plans and forthcoming events to ensure there is appropriate cover.

All the required documentation is readily available for inspection and is confidentially and safely stored. A comprehensive operational plan is in place and this together with detailed policies and procedures ensure the effective management of the pre-school. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated and contain relevant information. These underpin the whole ethos of the pre-school. An effective keyworker system is in place which enhances the care and support given to the children. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of child development, the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum which enables them to plan activities which enhance and extend the children's individual needs.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The pre-school team demonstrate a positive commitment to the development of the provision and key issues identified at previous inspections have been completed effectively to improve practice. These have contributed towards a better learning environment for children. The planning systems are evaluated regularly

to ensure that all areas of learning are promoted and that activities are interesting and offer sufficient challenge. The setting receive support from Early Years advisors and have a positive attitude towards implementing any necessary changes. For example, a number of improvements have been made since the last inspection.

All staff have job descriptions which set out their individual roles and responsibilities. The staff team know their roles within the pre-school and have good working relationships with each other. Effective procedures are in place for staff to ensure ongoing suitability and development. An annual appraisal system identifies staff training and developmental needs. The staff team are well qualified and on-going training and development is actively encouraged. A training file is in place and all certificates and details of training attended by staff is recorded. The majority of staff have completed a valid First Aid qualification and there is an effective rolling programme in place to maintain this. There are sufficiently qualified staff working with the children and staffing rotas ensure that ratios are met well.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides care and education.

Improvements since the last inspection

Two recommendations were set at the last inspection and staff have made changes to improve these areas.

A range of additional resources have been purchased to ensure appropriate resources are available that reflect positive images promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. These include dolls, books, posters and small world toys that reflect race and culture and small world resources, puzzles and books reflecting disability.

A written complaints procedure is now in place and the pre-school use the template set out in the October 2005 revisions to the National Standards to record any complaints regarding the care or education they offer. However, no complaints have been made since this system was put into operation.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints 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):

- encourage children to participate in serving themselves at snack times and to be involved in the preparation of snacks.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to develop skills in writing their own names, for example, encourage more self labelling for children
- further develop record keeping to clearly highlight children's starting points prior to starting at the pre-school
- ensure observations continue to be extended to include all aspects of learning

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