

# Bushytails Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY271062
<b>Inspection date</b>	11 December 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Marriott
<b>Setting Address</b>	Kingsthorpe Village Primary School, Knights Lane, Northampton, Northamptonshire, NN2 6QL
<b>Telephone number</b>	07765970912
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Bushytails Pre-School
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are 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?

Bushytails Pre-School was established in the 1960s. It operates from a mobile classroom sited within the grounds of Kingsthorpe Village Primary School. The setting is managed by a committee of parents and carers. There is one main playroom, an entrance hall, toilets, storage cupboards and a kitchen area. There is a safely enclosed outdoor garden for outdoor play.

The setting is open between 09.00 and 12.00 on five weekdays during term time only. The setting is currently trialling a lunch club on selected days until 12.55. A maximum of 26 children aged from two to under five years may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 25 children on roll and of these, 15 receive funding for nursery education. The children mainly come from the local and surrounding areas.

There are five staff who work with the children and of these, four hold appropriate childcare qualifications. The nursery receives input from the local authority and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children stay healthy because staff mostly follow generally effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Tables are regularly cleaned with anti-bacterial spray to prevent cross contamination. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection. Children wash their hands before snack and staff always remind children to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. However, children do not learn about germs through the daily routines because staff do not always remember to promote discussion about the reasons for hand washing. The premises are maintained in an adequately clean state, although toilets are not always flushed after use. Children wash their hands after craft activities in a communal basin of water which potentially spreads germs.

Children receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because most staff hold suitable first aid qualifications. Staff record accidents and include the relevant details, gaining a parental signature for each entry to protect children's welfare. The first aid boxes are accessible. However, some of the contents are out of date, indicating that staff do not fully implement their policy which states that the contents are checked regularly.

Children learn about the importance of healthy eating and drinking in this setting because they are provided with fresh drinking water and nutritious snacks appropriate to their individual needs. An extensive range of snack foods such as tomato soup with bread and butter, cheese on toast and fruit are provided for the children. This aspect of provision is highly popular with parents and carers. Alternatives are offered to children who do not want to try what is on offer. The group operates a mixture of whole group snack and rolling snack bar systems, according to the type of food available each day. Staff always sit with the children and use the opportunity to talk about everyday events. Children have the choice of milk or water, which they always pour themselves and this helps to develop their independence and co-ordination. Children do not become thirsty whilst playing because they have access to a covered jug of water and cups on a tray within sight and reach at the side of the playroom.

Children take part in regular physical play, both indoors and outside. A range of indoor equipment used under close adult supervision, enables children to develop confidence in meeting physical challenges, increasing their skill and control in moving, climbing and balancing. During the summer months, children enjoy free flow access to outdoor play.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff give good priority to the security of the premises and the supervision of the children. Visitors to the setting must announce their arrival by ringing the bell to alert staff to attend the locked entrance doors. Visitors must show their identity documentation and sign the adult visitor record. This system ensures that access to the children is suitably monitored. Children are safe in the setting because staff are appropriately vigilant and take precautionary action to prevent accidents. For example, a member of staff notices children climbing on the storage unit. They respond to her direction and get down promptly. She follows through with a simple explanation that this is dangerous and how upset everyone will be if they fall and injure themselves. This begins to involve children in taking responsibility for their own safety. Fire safety equipment is checked annually but staff do not carry out evacuation drills with sufficient

frequency to ensure the safety of the children and staff. Drills are not always recorded in a fire log book.

Children are warmly welcomed by the friendly staff and are well-cared for in a pleasant, suitably safe and secure indoor environment. The group has sole use of the premises and the staff display children's work attractively on the walls and hang pictures from the ceilings. Equipment and resources are safely stored in the storage units around the edges of the room and boxes are labelled with words and pictures to enable children to make independent choices. The large playroom is set out with activities relating to the six areas of learning and a book area is made inviting to children with cushions and soft toys.

Overall, children's welfare is adequately safeguarded because they are protected by informed adults who demonstrate a sound practical knowledge of signs and symptoms of various types of abuse. Most staff have not attended any recent training but have relevant literature to which they can refer in the event of a concern arising. However, staff do not routinely record concerns appropriately and are not fully conversant with current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The written statement for child protection does not contain a clear procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a staff member or volunteer. It does not contain contact names and telephone numbers for the local police and local authority social services department.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The friendly staff work well together as a team. They follow children to the activities which attract their interest and provide generally effective support to draw learning from play. This helps to promote positive outcomes for all children. Staff provide positive role models and give highly sensitive support to the children. They demonstrate a genuine affection for children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Staff encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition. Staff adapt their questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. This helps them meet the needs of all children. Appropriately, staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to underpin the foundations of the educational programme for any younger children. Children happily play together, and are beginning to take turns, share and to talk to others. They experiment with crayons, pencils and chalk, and explore sand, paint and dough. The varied organisation of snack time sometimes impacts negatively upon the flow of play and the developmental needs of the children. Children are called away from their play to have snack. They sit with little to do for an inappropriate length of time, whilst waiting for their soup to be served. When snack is finished there is little time left to play before tidying up to go outside. Food preparation is done in the kitchen out of sight of the children. This removes an opportunity to promote children's interest in what they eat and develop more detailed conversations about the food.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making acceptable progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. Staff engage with children at the activities of their choice and they interact appropriately to draw the learning from play. Staff work hard to prepare activities in advance and mostly achieve a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff have a reasonable knowledge of the Foundation Stage and plan to provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. However, some

learning is left to chance because the current planning format is not supporting the staff in the delivery of a fully effective educational programme. Plans identify weekly learning intentions under the six areas of learning appropriately linked to some of the stepping stones. Individual activities are not sufficiently referenced to the stepping stones to ensure a clear focus to secure and progress children's learning. Some stepping stones are omitted or feature infrequently across the term, so that gaps in coverage are beginning to appear within each area of learning. For example, plans show that musical instruments are included only once in the programme for creative development during the term.

There are no continuously and regularly updated assessment records. Staff accumulate samples of work, photographs, notes on achievements and narrative observations for each child in their keyworker group across the whole term. At the end of each term, staff painstakingly arrange these into scrapbooks as a memento for parents and carers. However, this information is not referenced to the stepping stones and there is no system to track children's progress through the stepping stones. The scrapbooks of information cannot easily be used to effectively feed into planning in a logical way to inform the next steps in children's learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured very well. Children display high levels of involvement in activities, talking freely about their home and community and show increasing independence in selecting and carrying out activities. For example, some children came and fetched the inspector to change the programme on the computer, because they wanted 'Bob the Builder' instead of Tizzy's Toy Box. Children enjoy the activities on offer, and are beginning to concentrate and persevere well to complete tasks. They show care and concern for one another. Relationships are very good.

Children have excellent opportunities to develop their language for communication and for thinking. Children build up vocabulary which reflects the breadth of their experiences. They are beginning to form recognisable letters and ascribe meaning to marks. For example, they write their own name or copy name cards. However, they have too few good quality opportunities to develop their listening and early reading skills. Children do not currently make frequent use of the book corner or listen to stories with increasing attention. They have insufficient opportunities to learn about how books work, and to learn to link sounds with letters, because these aspects are neglected in the planning system. Children use some number names accurately in play and willingly attempt to count with some numbers in the correct order. They show an interest in shape and space by playing with shapes or making arrangements with objects and show an interest in sustained construction activity by talking about shapes or arrangements. However, insufficient emphasis is given to calculation because it is overlooked on the plans.

Most aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Children use simple tools and techniques competently and appropriately. They join construction pieces together to build and balance and complete simple programs on the computer. Children show an awareness of change as they describe the weather patterns outside. Children contribute to a group firework picture, make Rangoli pictures with coloured rice for Diwali and make poppies to commemorate Remembrance Day. These activities help children to develop their awareness of the wider world. Less emphasis is placed upon planned exploratory and investigative experiences. Children mount climbing equipment using alternate feet and retrieve, collect and catch objects. They manipulate materials to achieve a planned effect and demonstrate increasing skill and control in their use of mark making implements. However, outside play is not sufficiently planned to secure the progression of children's physical skills and overall, plans do not identify sufficient activities to promote the development of children's health and bodily awareness. Children choose particular colours for a purpose as they explore a wide range of media and materials. Children respond

positively to experiences, expressing and communicating their ideas. They use body language, gestures and facial expression or words to indicate personal satisfaction or frustration through role play. However, musical activities do not feature frequently on the plans. Children begin to build a repertoire of songs but staff give less priority to the provision of opportunities to explore musical instruments and pitch, rhythm and tone.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children from the local community are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. The setting uses the local community to access the library, shops and the church. The children like to feed the sheep and hens at a local small-holding. Children raise money for charity through activities such as a fancy dress teddy competition. Toys, books and equipment reflect some positive images. Simple activities are planned to highlight festivals and themes around the world and these help to increase children's awareness of other cultures and develop a positive attitude to others. The group has a good practical awareness of how to include and appropriately care for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. A comprehensive policy is in place which details how the service will be provided to children. The very good levels of support ensure that all children are included and receive a great deal of individual attention so that their needs are effectively met.

Staff praise children frequently, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Behaviour is generally good and staff always challenge instances of poor behaviour in a consistent manner, supporting the child with an explanation as to why the behaviour is unacceptable. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff continue to strive to develop a positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. The setting has a suitable complaints process, but this has out of date contact details for the regulator and the complaints log is not in place. The group provides good quality information for parents and the entrance hallway and children's coat peg area contains a veritable wealth of general care and educational information. Staff are developing ways of sharing information about the children who receive nursery education. Parents are able to chat with their child's keyworker at the beginning and end of sessions and are given two formal opportunities a year to meet to discuss their child's progress. Due to irregular compilation by staff, parents cannot always see their child's records or make regular contributions to them. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, positive outcomes are promoted for children because the play leader, the supervisor, the staff and the committee work closely together for the benefit of the children. The staff have yet to develop ways of reflecting upon their group practice. For example, some of the daily routines are not sufficiently well-organised to ensure that children learn effectively. All staff hold appropriate clearances. Generally effective recruitment and induction procedures are in place. The system for recording children's attendance is manageable and accurately reflects the numbers of children on the premises. This ensures children's safety in an emergency situation. Group sizes and staff deployment contribute positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. A recent

review of documentation and actions arising from the completion of the self-evaluation form, remain as 'work in progress'. For example, the operational plan is being re-arranged under the five outcomes for children under the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Job descriptions are now in place and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the staff and committee, providing a sound basis upon which to move the development of the group forward.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The play leader and supervisor are gradually introducing new ways of organising the provision to improve the educational outcomes for children. For example, they have introduced a weekly staff meeting so that they can discuss the achievements of the children and the learning intentions for each of the activities set out. Staff are increasingly receptive to ideas and suggestions and are gaining the confidence to experiment with systems to find out what works for them. The group is beginning to learn how to use the self-evaluation form to monitor and evaluate their practice in order to improve the quality and standards of teaching and learning. Taken overall, children's needs are met.

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

Following the last inspection of day care, three recommendations were raised to improve the quality and standards of care for children. These related to ensuring that the child protection statement includes a procedure in the event of allegations against a member of staff or volunteer; that the complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator and that the written statement on special needs is consistent with current legislation and guidance. The staff did not have a copy of the last report and did not know what recommendations and key issues were previously raised. The statement relating to children with learning difficulties or disabilities now recognises a graduated response and meets requirements. Although policies are reviewed annually in March, amendments made do not fully reflect all current requirements and do not include up to date information. Therefore, various aspects of these previous issues remain to be fully addressed following this inspection.

Three key issues were identified for improvement following the last inspection of nursery education. The setting was asked to ensure that the evaluation of activities relates to the achievement of the learning intentions identified so as to inform future planning; to ensure that observations and assessments are used to plan the next stage in learning for individual children and to provide further opportunities for children to link letters to sounds and to develop their mathematical skills by solving simple problems. Being unaware of the issues raised, the setting has not taken any steps to address these matters.

The limited action in response to the recommendations made has restricted the progress of the setting since the last inspection and impacts negatively on the quality and standards of care and education for children.

### **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):

- take positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and ensure that the first aid box is suitably stocked, checked frequently and the contents replaced as necessary
- improve staff knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures in accordance with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Ensure that any concerns are recorded appropriately and reported appropriately without delay
- revise the child protection statement to ensure that it contains a clear procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a staff member or volunteer and the contact names and telephone numbers for the local police and local authority social services department
- increase the frequency of fire drills to ensure the safety of children and staff and maintain a fire log book for inspection
- ensure that the complaints system is fully in line with guidance issued October 2005
- review the organisation of the session routines to meet the needs of the children and develop ways to reflect on group practice in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the quality of provision

#### **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):

- identify clear learning intentions for outdoor physical activities to improve the quality of outdoor play and learning
- continue to develop the planning, correlating with the stepping stones to secure and progress children's learning across all aspects of the six areas of learning. Identify clearly, what the children are intended to learn from each activity, providing variety and choice
- develop the observation and regular assessment of children's learning, ensuring that observations correlate with the stepping stones and that records enable children's progress to be tracked against the stepping stones. Use the information gained to inform the next steps in children's learning.



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