

Bargates Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223498
Inspection date	05 October 2007
Inspector	Kathryn Mary Harding
Setting Address	The Bargates, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 8QS
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Registered person	Gillian Bilbrough and Robert Bilbrough
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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?

Bargates Children's Centre opened in 1997 and operates from a building which was originally a school and is situated in the town of Leominster in Hereford. The children's centre uses the whole building comprising of eight rooms on two floors, a baby sleep room, toilets, kitchen, laundry, staff room and an office. A maximum of 111 children may attend the children's centre at any one time. The children's centre is open each weekday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 50 weeks of the year. All children share access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 143 children aged from three months to 11 years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and wider areas. The Children's Centre currently supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The Children's Centre employs 20 staff, 19 of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children are cared for in a warm, clean setting where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene and personal care through the daily routines such as the use of individual paper towels. Pictorial signs displayed in the toilet area encourage good hand washing techniques. Children are gently reminded to wash their hands, so helping to prevent the spread of infection. They know that germs have to be washed away. All staff have attended an infection control workshop, so helping to keep children healthy.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities which contribute to their good health. There are separate outdoor areas for younger and older children. They can access activities to help them develop control of their bodies such as a slide, climbing frame and tricycles. They can access a wide range of equipment indoors, such as play dough and small world play to help develop their fine manipulative skills. They are encouraged to get plenty of fresh air as they go outdoors daily, weather permitting.

Children begin to understand the benefits of a healthy diet as they are offered healthy and nutritious snacks and meals such as different fruits, cheese and breadsticks. These are freshly prepared on site by a trained cook who ensures that the weekly menu offers a balanced and varied range of healthy foods. Children and staff talk about how healthy food "makes us big and strong". Children are offered regular drinks such as milk and water and they are able to access drinking water throughout the day, so they can deal with their own care needs.

Staff hold babies when giving them a bottle and adhere to their individual routines particularly with regards to sleeping and feeding. Daily diaries are completed for babies so parents are aware of what their child has eaten and how long they have slept. However, in the baby room the whole area is carpeted so at snack and mealtimes food goes directly onto the carpet which is not hygienic.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly greeted by staff on arrival, giving the children a sense of belonging and making them feel valued. Parents freely chat with staff and stay to settle their child. Children's artwork, posters, photographs and pictures are displayed on the walls making the rooms more welcoming to all. During child-initiated activities children are able to select from a wide range of activities, using toys and resources that are of good quality and meet safety standards.

The rooms of the nursery are maintained in a satisfactory condition and provide children with adequate space to play safely. They are provided with areas for rest and sleep and suitable furniture and equipment to enable them to sleep, eat and play in comfort.

The rooms of the nursery are checked prior to the children arriving and the staff that open up are responsible for this. The children are supervised by staff at all times, so helping to keep children safe. The outdoor area has a soft safety surface and is enclosed. A written daily check is carried out before children use this area. However, some drains outside are accessible to children and this is a potential hazard. Fire safety is well-promoted in the nursery and there is an appointed fire marshal that has attended relevant training.

Children are well protected by staff that have a good understanding of child protection issues and all staff have attended child protection training and this is regularly updated. They understand the correct procedures to follow for reporting concerns and have a good understanding of signs to be concerned about in relation to child protection matters. This helps to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The after school children have fun and enjoy the time they spend in the setting. They are relaxed and staff interact very well with the children encouraging them to decide what they would like to do. As they play 'hide and seek' staff join in with the game. They freely chatter at snack time about their day at school and favourite television programmes as staff spend their time sitting and listening to them and joining in the conversations.

Younger children settle well and staff offer reassurance to them as they wave goodbye to parents. They take part in a good range of worthwhile activities and play opportunities which they find interesting and enjoyable such as exploring in the sand and building the bricks and knocking them down. They develop good relationships with staff and each other, for example, they confidently ask staff if they can read a story. Staff do this in a lively way, snuggle the children in, so making them feel safe and secure. They concentrate well as they play with the cars, garage and small world figures.

Children are encouraged to think of a nursery rhyme that they would like to sing. They count the number of bricks and children. They talk about the different colours of the cups and play happily with the small world figures. As adults read stories they point to the pictures and talk about the story so encouraging their interest in books. At child-initiated times they choose what they want to play with, so encouraging their independence. As they stand and make footprints in the sand staff show them the patterns they have made with their footwear. Staff work directly with the children and consistently involve themselves and interact in their play.

In the baby room staff sit with children on the floor and join in with their play, encouraging them to talk and repeat words, as they play 'Peepo'. Warm and trusting relationships with staff ensure that children feel secure in their care environment. As children climb through the tunnel they are well supported by staff who encourage them to do this on their own. Children look at themselves in the low-level mirrors and have fun in the balls as they post them through the holes. They play with the small world figures as they reach out to get them.

Snack times and mealtimes are sociable occasions with staff sitting and chatting with the children about the food they like. They are excited about the activities on offer and thoroughly enjoy using the wide range of equipment. They are happy and obviously enjoy their time spent in the setting. Staff have a good understanding of child development which enables them to offer good quality care.

The 'Birth to three matters' framework is effectively implemented for younger children. Staff have just started a new system of observing children as they play and records of their observations, artwork and photographs are stored in their 'yellow profiles'. Plans link to aspects of the framework and are informed by children's observations and assessments so ensuring children's progression.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Children show an interest in what they are doing and staff support them where necessary in their play, making children feel valued.

Staff are willing to attend training and have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Plans link to the six areas of learning. Activities for children are adapted and offer sufficient challenge for more able children. Observations are undertaken of the children and these link to assessments and the planning to ensure the next steps in children's learning are catered for.

Children behave very well, with staff continually praising and encouraging them, so enhancing their self-esteem. They remind each other that they have to share the magnifying glasses as they explore in the sand, leaves and pine cones. They play well together and confidently approach adults, for example, to tell them about their new trainers. They can be the 'special helper of the day' and do little jobs, such as giving out the plates, giving them a sense of responsibility. They are encouraged to put on their own aprons prior to taking part in a craft activity and mop up any spillages at snack time, so increasing their independence.

Children confidently talk in small and large groups about what they are going to play with and what they have been doing. They can mark make as they access a range of mark making resources and older children are encouraged to write their own names and practise hand writing patterns in their work books. They can access books but the area is not attractive and children are not drawn to looking at books. However, they listen well to stories as adults use props as they tell the story of the three bears and relay this in a lively way. They look at different sounds as they talk about the days of the week and recall words that begin with the same sound. As they sprinkle the sand into the tray they spontaneously sing 'Sprinkle, Sprinkle Little Star'.

Children gain confidence in using and recognising numbers during the daily routines and respond to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in many planned and spontaneous activities. They have opportunities to count as they count the number of children at the table, the number of bricks and count the days of the week. They learn to recognise numerals as they look for the corresponding number from the washing line. They are encouraged to solve simple number problems, as they sing number rhymes such as 'Nine Currant Buns'. As they play in the water they learn about quantity. When talking about the cookies they made and the beads they talk about different shapes, such as spheres. They make patterns with the threading beads and learn to sequence the pictures in their workbooks.

Children look at the days of the week, the weather and record their findings. They gain a sense of time as they talk about what presents they had for their birthday and the cookies they made yesterday. They explore and investigate as they play in the water with the containers and use magnifying glasses as they play in the sand with the 'wild animals', conkers, cones and leaves. They become aware of their local environment as they have looked at the topic of 'people who help us' and help to feed the birds. They talk about animals hibernating and how they store their food for the winter. They can access a computer and laptop with educational programmes to consolidate their learning. They build and construct with a wide variety of construction sets.

Children's physical skills develop and improve through a variety of experiences. They confidently ride around on the tricycles with increasing confidence. They can access a climbing frame and experiment with different ways of sliding down the slide. They competently use glue spreaders and develop their fine skills by cutting along the lines of the leaves they have drawn with the scissors.

Children have opportunities to play imaginatively in the home area. They decide to make a den and go and have a picnic. They continually look at colours and freely name the colours of items, such as the beads, cars and clothes they are wearing. They are encouraged to develop their senses as they feel and talk about the leaves. They sing familiar rhymes with enthusiasm and spontaneously sing the 'ABC' song as a whole group. They act out an Autumn story using props and convincingly taking on different roles. However, they are unable to freely access a wide range of craft materials so they are unable to make their own creations.

Very good systems are in place to care for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including liaising with parents outside agencies and ensuring individual plans are in place and monitored. Overall, children make good progress in all areas of learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's awareness of the wider world is extended as the setting have a range of activities, toys and resources to positively reflect diversity. They look at different festivals such as Diwali and do related activities linked in with the festival. They visit the local residential home for the elderly and take part in fund raising events such as a nursery fête giving them a sense of community. They are valued, listened to and respected as individuals.

Systems are in place, such as individual education plans and staff liaise very closely with parents and external agencies to effectively promote children's learning and welfare. They ensure through the care provided, a strong commitment to inclusion for all children. They have a specific officer, who has attended all the relevant training with allotted time to develop this area of work.

Staff have a consistent, positive approach to managing children's behaviour. As a result children behave well and understand what is expected of them, as they are given explanations as to why the behaviour is not acceptable. Puppets are used to explore feelings and model appropriate behaviour. Good behaviour is encouraged as the staff give lots of praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts. At snack time good manners are encouraged and children sing a song about good manners, so kindness and respect is promoted. Children relate well to each other and learn to have consideration for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff, parents and external agencies all work together to meet each child's needs. Parents have access to a prospectus which details information about the educational programme. They are encouraged to share information about their child's interests and requested to complete questionnaires about the service provided. Parents are invited into the setting to discuss their child's achievements at a parents' meeting and also are requested to complete a Foundation Stage entry profile. They can also talk daily with staff. The nursery hosts fun days where parents can get involved in art activities and special evenings on topics such as, speech and language development, behaviour management and the Foundation Stage curriculum. Informative notice boards containing photographs of what the children have been doing in the session are available, so ensuring parents are fully aware of topics. Parents spoken with comment very favourably on the setting and feel their children are very happy and staff are very approachable. A complaints procedure is in place and parents are made aware of the procedure to follow if they wish to raise any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Staff clearly know about their roles and responsibilities, so helping to ensure that the planned activities are interesting to the children. They regularly evaluate the sessions to look at further improvement and meet weekly to discuss issues that have arisen and disseminate information gained from courses attended. The nursery has a training and development co-ordinator to ensure staff are able to access the training they require and on-going training within the setting is given a high priority. Staff have regular reviews to ensure they are all working effectively to meet the children's needs. The setting has a very good range of resources to promote children's progress in all areas of learning.

The registered person uses effective and robust recruitment procedures which ensure that staff are appropriately vetted and qualified. All of the required paperwork is in place, along with an informative operational plan. Staff are approachable, caring and work very well together as a team to promote children's health, enjoyment and achievement. Policies and procedures are used effectively to promote the welfare, care and learning of children. They are shared regularly with parents to keep them well informed about the service and their child's activities. This contributes to continuity in the children's care. Overall, the children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the staff agreed to develop the programme for outdoor play provision. They have now introduced a separate area for younger children and added a bird table and children can plant flowers.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- ensure all floor surfaces are hygienically maintained with particular reference to the baby room

- ensure all drains outside are inaccessible to children.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure children can access an attractive book area and freely access creative activities to enable them to make their own creations.

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