

Busy Bees at Ashton House

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309355
Inspection date	24 January 2008
Inspector	Alison Margaret Walker
Setting Address	Ashton Park, Pedders Lane, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston, PR2 1HL
Telephone number	01772 726696
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Registered person	Busy Bees Nurseries Limited
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

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?

Ashton House Children's Day Nursery opened in 1994 and is part of the Busy Bees nursery chain. It is situated in Ashton Park in Preston. The setting operates from nine rooms in a large detached property and is open all year round from 07.30 to 18.00 each weekday. The setting is registered to provide care for up to 239 children aged from three months to under eight years. Out of school care is also provided.

There are currently 170 children aged from four months to under 11 years on roll; 47 of these are in receipt of nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and are drawn from the local area. The setting employs 40 staff, of these, 22 hold an appropriate childcare qualification and five are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children have excellent opportunities for fresh air and exercise by accessing the enclosed grounds of the nursery on a daily basis. Young children squeal with excitement as they put their coats on to play outside and then they march out into the garden singing. Children enjoy a considerable amount of time outside playing on equipment, exploring and investigating. Children love playing in the leaves, feeling the texture and putting them into a large wheelbarrow. Children do exercises with a member of staff before lunchtime. Many of the children go swimming, attend football coaching and ballet lessons. Children proudly show the ballet positions they have learnt. They enjoy regular local walks, for example, to the local park. Planning covers physical play for all ages which effectively enhances all aspects of children's overall development.

Older children access drinks independently, however, drinks for the younger children are kept on a high shelf. All staff are fully aware of individual dietary requirements and preferences which are discussed in full with parents, such as allergies. The nursery employs a cook and the children receive a very good range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. Meals are presented attractively and this encourages the children to eat healthily. As a consequence, children have excellent appetites, they enjoy their meals and feed themselves from an early age. Children sleep according to their individual needs and parents' wishes. Cots and floor cushions are used with clean bedding provided. Younger children sleep in a darkened room, they are checked every five minutes, a chart is completed and a monitor is consistently used.

Generally good hygiene facilities and routines have a positive impact on the children's health. Older children wash their hands independently, however, hand washing routines for younger children are not always consistent. Nappy changing facilities are of a high standard, providing facilities for staff to change children in a clean and comfortable environment. Staff wear plastic gloves and aprons for each nappy change to prevent the risk of cross-infection. Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid; most of the staff hold a valid first aid certificate and training is ongoing. There are fully stocked first aid kits available throughout the nursery and these are regularly replenished. Concise written policies are in place regarding sickness, accidents and administration of medicines; these are fully implemented and shared with all parents.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The environment is very warm and welcoming with good evidence of children's play and activity throughout. Displays are vibrant and colourful giving a clear picture of what it is like to be a child in this setting. The basement used for the out of school children is particularly inviting, stimulating and ideal for this age group. Parents, children and visitors receive a very friendly welcome on arrival. The entrance area is very informative, for example, cohesive information about staff. This includes photographs, information on their qualifications, their specific roles and responsibilities. Space is used very creatively and it is constantly evaluated to ensure it is still working effectively to meet the children's needs. All areas used by the children are very well organised, attractive and inviting; as a result, the children can confidently access areas and activities independently.

Children benefit from an excellent range of safety measures, giving the utmost priority to keeping them safe. For example, the outside play area is totally secure and a thorough risk assessment is done on this area before children play out. The staff are extremely rigorous in checking all areas inside and out, recording any concerns and removing any hazards. This ensures that any risks to the children's safety are minimised. The children develop a sound awareness of safety through practising emergency evacuations regularly. There are consistently very good staffing ratios; as a result, the children are supervised at all times, they are unable to leave the premises unattended and are never left alone with persons who have not been vetted. The system for managing access to the premises is robust. Unauthorised persons are unable to gain entry, a closed circuit television is used and staff ensure visitors' identity is checked and that they sign in and out.

Child protection procedures are robust. The setting has a clearly written child protection policy in place, which includes procedures to follow if there are allegations made against a member of staff. This is shared and explained to all parents. All staff have completed child protection training and this is also covered during staff inductions. As a result, all the staff know the possible signs of abuse and the reporting procedure. They fully understand the need for confidentiality, maintaining the necessary records and giving high priority to children's welfare.

There is a good range of quality, age-appropriate toys, furniture and equipment available which fully meets the needs of all the children attending. For example, sand, water, paint, dough, mark making, information technology, construction, books and jigsaws. Staff use toys, equipment and materials effectively to ensure children are provided with a high class range of activities that promote their learning in all areas. For example, children can freely access the computer and a variety of educational programmes. High quality toys and equipment are available on child-sized tables and low shelves which are clearly labelled with text and pictures. The children independently choose their own activities with ease and confidence.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children play imaginatively from an early age. When playing outside, a group of children set up a delightful activity pretending to bake a cake. They talk about what ingredients they need. One child says they need chocolates to make it taste nice. They say they must wear oven gloves so they do not burn their hands and they watch the cake rise in the toy oven. Children confidently make decisions and are given opportunities to make selections about what and who they would like to play with. Some children decide to play alone in the sand whilst others refer to play in a group exploring light and dark with torches. All the staff are motivated and enthusiastic. They are kind, attentive, are interested in the children and value what they say and do. Staff working with the younger children have attended 'Birth to three matters' training. They implement the framework well into children's everyday play and planning and assessment systems are appropriate for this age group.

Activities are planned in advance but remain fully flexible to allow for spontaneity and for children to initiate them. A good range of resources are available for children to freely access. These include, books, creative materials, jigsaws and construction toys. The staff balance their time carefully to allow children to play and learn independently as well as giving time to support and encourage them. The staff show a very keen interest in the children, in what they say and do. They consistently talk and listen to them and join in with their play. A child is carefully wrapping bricks in tin foil, explaining to a member of staff that they are presents for their brother and sister.

Children's creativity is encouraged appropriately by the staff. They enjoy working with a wide range of materials, such as paint, dough, pasta, rice, glitter, wet and dry sand. Very young children love sitting in the low sand tray and feeling the sand run through their fingers. Children are able to express themselves through a variety of media, such as pencils, crayons, pens, paint and glue. A child makes notes with a pen on a clipboard whilst playing in the hospital role play area. Children communicate confidently and happily talk with their peers, staff and visitors. They show a keen interest in books and handle them carefully. They enjoy looking at these on their own, with staff and in group situations. Children of all ages develop good language and number skills through lots of conversation, singing, action rhymes and stories.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have attended training on the Foundation Stage and competently put this into practice. A wide range of activities and experiences are provided to cover all areas of children's learning. Planning is flexible to allow for spontaneous activities, for example, a child decides to dig in the garden to look for worms whilst others run and hide in the garden. Children are given a wealth of opportunities to explore and take risks within a safe environment. Children are confident communicators and are able to recall past events, such as going to the doctors to get an injection. They explain that they had this so they can go to big school. They said the nurse said they were big and brave. Children use tools and materials very competently to create the desired effect. A child makes stickers for staff and other children with their names on using sticky labels and a crayon. Children enjoy an increasing range of books and can recognise some familiar words, such as their names and some animals. However, some story time sessions with younger children are not organised effectively and some children become distracted spoiling the session for other children.

Children engage in activities that develop their hand-eye coordination. They accurately operate the mouse to complete a simple programme on the computer and operate a remote controlled car, commenting that they are making it go backwards and forwards. Children use size and positional language confidently. When playing outside one child comments that their friend is hiding behind the tree and another is hiding under the table. Children show a keen interest in numbers. Some count to 20 and beyond when counting as they go outside to play. A younger child is playing with different coloured feathers and says there are two purple ones and three yellow ones. The child then comments that there are more yellow feathers. All children separate from their main carer with confidence. They look out of the window as their parents drive off and wave. They can dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene. For example, they put on their coats and boots to play outside and wipe their noses independently. They show care and concern for each other, as one child gets a tissue for another. Children remember and talk about significant events, such as going to the doctors and the dentist. They begin to differentiate between past and present. A child recalls the rabbits eating the leaves of the vegetables they had planted. Another child explains that their football coach will come to the nursery tomorrow in his van. They know the days of the week and are learning to tell the time. The children show a keen interest in their environment. They have an allotment where they plant a variety of fruit and vegetables which they care for and then later eat. Assessment records for each child show their approach to learning and their achievements and starting points are clearly identified. Overall, children make good progress towards the early learning goals given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The staff manage the children's behaviour extremely positively and consistently, according to the child's level of understanding and maturity, for example, they are calm and clear regarding routines and boundaries. The setting's behaviour policy is in place, fully implemented and shared with parents. As a result, the children are very well behaved. They are able to take turns, share and use manners. The children are kind and caring, for example, they help each other on with their coats, they hold hands and stroke each other's hair. The children have a very positive approach to learning and they show independence in selecting and carrying out activities, for example, helping themselves to paint, paintbrushes and aprons.

The setting has a complaints procedure in place, which is shared with parents and includes the name and contact number of the regulator. The children have access to a rich selection of resources and activities which support their knowledge and understanding of the world and diversity. Children enjoy taking part in a variety of different celebrations, for example, they made leek and potato soup on Saint David's day and are currently preparing for Australia day. Some staff are employed who speak different languages. Posters throughout the premises reflect a positive image of the world in which we live. There are good strategies in place for children with learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure that they are fully supported within the setting. Individual care is provided if needed, staff are able to borrow specialist equipment and organise specific play areas to meet the child's specific needs.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. The parents receive clear and detailed information about the educational provision through parents' evenings, notice boards, planning, policies, profiles, newsletters and daily verbal feedback from the staff. Parents have good opportunities to share what they know about their child by contributing to their profiles, through regular discussions with their child's key worker and an effective settling-in procedure. Parents describe the staff as brilliant, supportive and competent in dealing with any concerns. They are pleased with their children's progress and they feel the nursery provides a stimulating environment where children are happy, confident and gain new skills and experiences. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation of the environment is very good. Staff know their roles and responsibilities and effectively implement routines to give children a wealth of rich experiences. Children benefit from very well deployed staff who consistently interact with them and give children support and encouragement, which helps them feel secure and confident. Many of the staff are qualified in childcare and they are all very experienced practitioners. They clearly enjoy their work, they are enthusiastic, highly motivated and show a clear commitment to all the children in their care. All of the required documentation is in place, is easily accessible and stored securely, such as emergency contact details. A very effective system is in place to record the staff's, visitors' and children's daily attendance, which is accurate and up to date. Recruitment and selection systems are rigorous to ensure high quality staff are employed.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The staff team are committed to improving care and education, and have regular opportunities for staff development, such as attending training and staff meetings. All the staff are fully involved in planning the curriculum and assessment records are regularly updated, monitored and evaluated. This helps the staff

to identify strengths, areas for improvement and to influence future planning. The staff are mature and work well together as a team. They are fully supported by the management who influence good practice by being highly motivated and having a hands-on approach. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection recommendations were raised regarding information systems for parents, documentation, risk assessments, and opportunities for children under two years to access their own toys and play materials. A comprehensive system is now in place to ensure information given to parents is read and understood. These include newsletters, parents' evenings, key worker system and daily communication. An operational plan has been devised which is a working document and contributes to the smooth running of the nursery. Medication records are accurate and include parents' signatures which has a positive impact on the children's health and well-being. All staff are now aware of the risk assessment procedure and weekly assessment records are completed daily on areas that are used, ensuring the children's safety. Play materials and toys for children under two years are all now at their level encouraging free choice and independence.

At the last nursery education inspection recommendations were made relating to children's mathematical learning in everyday activities, the staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage and information given to parents whose children are in receipt of funding regarding the Foundation Stage. Staff now provide opportunities for children to link and consolidate their mathematical learning in everyday activities, such as counting cups at lunchtime.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004, Ofsted received concerns relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person and National Standard 6: Safety. The concerns were originally shared with another agency. A childcare inspector from Ofsted Early Years then visited the provision on 14 July 2005. Actions were raised and satisfactorily met by the registered provider. Ofsted was satisfied that the provider remained qualified for registration.

Since 1 April 2004, Ofsted received further concerns relating to National Standard 1: Suitable Person. The concerns were originally shared with another agency. A childcare inspector from Ofsted Early Years then visited the provision on 26 June 2007. Actions were raised and have been satisfactorily met by the registered provider. Ofsted was satisfied that the provider remained qualified for registration.

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):

- improve younger children's independent access to drinks
- improve systems to ensure children's hand washing procedures are consistently followed.

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 story times are organised effectively to enable all children to participate and make a valuable contribution.

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