

# Busy Bees Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123607
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Gail Groves
<b>Setting Address</b>	23 Leyton Road, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2HZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 762220
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<b>Registered person</b>	Busy Bees Nurseries Ltd 3454787
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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?

Busy Bees Day Nursery is one of a chain of nurseries run by Busy Bees Nurseries Limited 3454787. It opened in 1997 and operates from two floors in a large converted house situated in Harpenden in Hertfordshire. A maximum of 55 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 87 children from three months to four years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 20 staff, of whom 11 including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Two staff are working towards a qualification.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, shoes are not allowed to be worn by anyone entering the baby room to protect the children from exposure to dirt and contamination. Appropriate nappy changing procedures are consistently followed by all staff to prevent cross-infection and some staff hold current first aid certificates and are able to give children appropriate treatment if they become ill or are injured. In addition, children learn to understand some simple, good health and hygiene practices such as washing their hands after using the toilet and before eating and covering their mouth with their hand when they cough. Staff also sometimes discuss with older children that washing their hands helps to get rid of germs. However, some hand washing routines are not always consistently carried out. As a result, children are not fully developing good hygiene routines for later life.

Children are appropriately nourished and are offered healthy snacks such as fruit. The menus have recently been revised and follow a four week cycle to ensure that children enjoy variety. Drinking water is available in children's individually named beakers and water bottles and older children can help themselves to these independently if they are thirsty. Children have some opportunities to learn about healthy eating through planned activities and topic work and through some discussions with staff at meal times. Children have their health and dietary needs met because staff work well with parents. They discuss dietary needs before children begin to attend and ensure that these are carefully met at all times. Babies' feeding routines are always closely followed and when they are being weaned staff work with parents to ensure that children are encouraged and supported throughout the process.

Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors. They use the outside play area at least once a day and play with balls, hoops, small climbing frames and slides, a parachute, a plastic rocker and some sit and ride toys and trikes. Inside, young children enjoy using tunnels, tents and soft play equipment which encourages them to crawl, slide, balance and climb. Weekly physical activity sessions called 'Socatots' and 'Stretch-n-Grow' are organised by the nursery for the children in the pre-school room and are run by specialised outside agencies. They develop children's coordination and large muscle skills and help them to think about their bodies, the effect of exercise on their heart and the importance of healthy living and a healthy diet. On a similar basis, younger children have sessions called 'Yogabugs' every other week and these also encourage the development of physical skills. Babies' physical development is appropriately supported and extended because staff encourage them to sit, crawl and stand and to develop the balance and coordination they need in order to learn to walk. Active play is balanced with less energetic play and children have opportunities to rest and sleep built into their daily routine so that they do not become overtired and fractious.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment in which systems and procedures are in place to ensure that the risks to their safety are minimised. For example, they use good quality, suitable and safe equipment which meets their differing needs so that they are able to play and take part in activities safely. Children and staff are signed in

and registers are completed in each room so that it is clear who is in the building and where they are should there need to be an emergency evacuation. Entry to the nursery is closely monitored by staff and visitors are recorded and are required to show identification so that children are protected from people who have not been vetted. Risk assessments are carried out and any identified safety issues are reported and rectified. However, some of these procedures are not always consistently carried out and as a result, children's safety is not fully protected.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through discussions and practical experiences within their daily routine. For example, staff remind children to walk carefully down the stairs and to hold onto the handrail so that they do not fall and to sit properly on their chair in case they slip. Regular fire drills enable children to begin to understand what they need to do in an emergency and visits to the fire station and topics about people who help us reinforce children's understanding of some dangers. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that children are kept safe on outings. For example, staff take a mobile telephone, children's contact details and a first aid kit as well as drinks and sun cream if appropriate. Young children wear reins or are strapped into a buggy and older children walk holding hands with a member of staff or each other. Risk assessments are carried out before visits and parents are sometimes asked to come and help in order to ensure a high adult to child ratio is maintained.

Children are also safeguarded because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms that would give rise to concerns about a child's welfare and the relevant contact details are kept readily available so that advice can be sought and any such concerns can be reported. Staff induction procedures highlight the importance of the child protection policy and safeguarding children procedures and appropriate training is arranged as soon as possible for all new staff.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children settle well and are happy in the setting. Consequently, they join in with all of the play and learning opportunities provided for them and confidently make decisions, explore and investigate their environment. As a result, they are able to extend their thinking and learning. For example, a child explores how to use glue to attach items to her collage and another investigates how he can make water pour out of a watering can in a shower. Babies have many opportunities to explore their environment through tactile experiences such as playing with compost, ice cubes, bubbles and sand. In addition, the nursery has a sensory room in which both babies and children can experience a variety of sound and light displays and textured resources. Children's progress is assessed and their individual needs are identified through observations as well as discussions with parents. For example, tracker books are used throughout the nursery to record children's attainments and informal discussions with parents at the beginning and end of the day allow staff to identify and meet individual needs such as potty training or poor behaviour.

Children are involved in a range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support most areas of their development and learning. For example, they enjoy a variety of play such as painting, gluing, modelling and cooking to develop creative skills. They mix cornflour and water to make 'gloop', paint their hands and feet to make prints and mix paint together to make different colours. They develop mathematical ideas and begin to understand numbers as they measure each other on a height chart, sing number songs and weigh and measure out the

ingredients to make cakes. They develop their imagination as they dress-up, play in the home corner or pretend to look after a doll. They learn about the natural world as they plant cress and sunflowers, grow carrot tops, look at insects to learn about their life cycles.

Staff are always interested in what children do and say and talk and interact with them throughout the day. Consequently, children are learning to relate well to others and to become good communicators. For example, staff use exaggerated facial expressions and tone of voice to good effect to reinforce babies' understanding of speech and reward their early attempts at communication by showing obvious pleasure and delight. As a result, babies are alert and interested in other people and are developing social skills. Staff work closely with the families of children whose first language is not English to support and develop their language and communication skills appropriately.

Children regularly use a variety of paint brushes, crayons and glue spreaders, manipulate dough, use scissors and play with a range of interactive resources in order to develop fine motor skills and coordination. They enjoy the 'Yogabugs' sessions and indoor soft play experiences and these help them to develop some large motor skills. However, the outside play area is poorly resourced and does not provide children with sufficient variety and challenge. Consequently, children's large motor skills and coordination cannot be fully supported and extended.

### Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children arrive at nursery eager to begin the day and show positive attitudes to learning. For example, they are very interested to discover who visitors are, why they have come to visit and what they are doing. Children are encouraged to independently choose and select their own resources and decide what they would like to do during free play times so that they can develop their learning in ways that interest them. They are helped to learn that they must sit and listen during story time and must take turns when using popular resources such as the whiteboard so that they develop good social skills. They are interested in writing and mark making and readily choose to take part in these activities during free play sessions. They quickly find their written names at circle time and staff talk about the sound that the first letter of their name makes to help to develop their phonic awareness. Children listen to stories with interest and through discussions are helped to develop their thinking and reasoning skills. For example, staff talk to children about why something in the story happened and ask them to predict what they think will happen next.

Children play counting and dice games to develop their understanding of numbers and an adult led maths activity is planned on at least three days a week. They explore shape, space and measure as they look at and compare their different heights and as part of a science initiative they have made a rain gage to measure and look at how much rain had fallen. However, practical and meaningful opportunities to develop children's problem solving and calculation skills during normal everyday activities are missed. Consequently, these aspects of children's mathematical development are not being sufficiently supported and extended. Children learn about the world around them in a variety of interesting ways. For example, they experiment with growing cress in wet and dry conditions to understand what is needed for plants to thrive, watch the worms that they have collected in the garden move around the wormery they have made and explore magnets to find out which items will stick to them and which will not. They use a variety of construction toys to discover how to connect and join, build and balance and have access to a laptop and interactive whiteboard to develop an understanding of technology. The whiteboard is new to the nursery and staff are currently looking at the most effective ways to use it with the children.

Children take part in a range of creative activities. For example, they play with dough, build with bricks, make junk models and create collages using a variety of materials, both man-made and natural. They sing songs, listen to a variety of music and develop their imagination and language as they listen to and then enact stories such as 'The Tiger Who Came To Tea'. They regularly take part in the 'Stretch-n-Grow' and 'Soacatots' sessions to develop their physical skills and bodily awareness and sometimes visit the local park to use the large scale climbing equipment. In the outside play area they play parachute games, throw and catch balls and bean bags and play basketball and cricket. However, children's physical development is not being fully supported because they do not have sufficient opportunities to climb, balance and pedal using age-appropriate resources.

The pre-school room is staffed by a part-time teacher and two appropriately qualified and experienced staff who work together to provide a curriculum which generally promotes children's progression towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage. Planning systems identify the areas of learning to be covered during adult-led activities although this does not readily allow staff to monitor that the curriculum covers all the area of learning over time. However, the learning intentions of activities are recorded and clearly show how they link to the stepping stones of children's learning within the Foundation Stage. Staff assess children's progress using observations and samples of their work. They maintain a tracker book for each child and use these records of achievements to guide their future planning and teaching. Staff use some teaching methods that help children to learn effectively. For example, they ensure that they have children's full attention before telling them something important, ask carefully devised questions to reinforce children's understanding of what they have seen and heard and use visual clues such as puppets to engage children more fully in a story. In addition, they provide some challenge for older or more able children during adult-led activities and they sometimes also reflect this in the plans. Staff manage children well, have appropriate expectations for their behaviour and discuss issues such as why someone is upset when they have been hurt so that they are encouraged to think about the consequences of their behaviour on others. Staff use their time, the resources and the accommodation appropriately to meet children's needs.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are valued and included and feel a sense of belonging because staff know them well and ensure that they feel secure. For example, structured settling-in procedures are offered both to new children and to children who are moving to another room within the nursery. Consequently, they form good relationships with the staff and are confident and happy. Children develop self-esteem because their efforts and achievements are recognised and valued. For example, their art work is displayed attractively throughout the nursery and their attempts to be independent when serving their own lunch or putting on their coats are praised. They have opportunities throughout their daily routine to make choices and take decisions and this strengthens their confidence and self-esteem still further. For example, they decide what they wish to play with, choose their own resources and decide which cereal they would like to eat at breakfast.

Children's individual needs are met because staff work in close partnership with parents and carers. For example, parents are welcome to come and observe their children if they are at all concerned about them and staff keep them fully informed about how they are settling. Information sheets to share with parents about babies' feeding, sleeping and nappy changing routines are completed daily. When children are going through important developmental stages such as potty training or weaning, staff work closely with parents in order to give children

continuity and consistency. There are appropriate procedures in place to identify children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff liaise with other professionals in order to provide them with appropriate support.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Staff help children to respond to appropriate expectations for their behaviour and to develop social skills. For example, they use sticker charts to reward and encourage positive behaviour and help children with particularly challenging behaviour learn how to deal with their anger and understand what is not acceptable. All children are encouraged to share and take turns. As a result, they are becoming aware of their own needs, are learning to respect the needs of others and are beginning to be able to work harmoniously together. For example, when they play number games they learn that they have to wait for their turn before they can throw the dice and they begin to understand that they must share a box of crayons with other children at the table who are also drawing a picture. Children benefit from some activities and resources which help them value diversity and develop a positive awareness of the differences and similarities between people. For example, resources such as books, puzzles and dolls as well as posters and displays reflect positive images of people with disabilities or those who come from different cultural backgrounds or use different languages. Topics about other countries and religious festivals are also planned to develop children's understanding of the wider world. For example, children visit the local church to meet the vicar and learn about the building and what happens there or eat noodles, make a large dragon and take part in a dragon dance to learn about Chinese New Year.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Parents share what they know about their children through informal talks with staff at the beginning and end of the day. This enables staff to begin to understand and meet children's individual needs. Parents are informed about children's achievements and progress at twice yearly parent consultation evenings and they report that they value these opportunities to look at their children's records and discuss their progress more formally. Parents are provided with some information about the setting and its provision through newsletters and the plans and daily routines for each of the different age groups of children in the nursery are displayed. However, they are not given sufficient information about the Foundation Stage or how the activities provided by the nursery help children to make progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, parents cannot fully and effectively support and continue their children's learning at home.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Staff have a clear sense of purpose and demonstrate a commitment to improvement. For example, they are about to take part in a quality assurance scheme with the National Day Nurseries Association and every three months the managers complete a written evaluation and grading of various aspects of the nursery's environment and provision to identify the setting's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, staff throughout the nursery evaluate the planned daily adult-led activities in order to highlight ways that the provision and the learning outcomes for children could be improved. Recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with appropriate knowledge and understanding of child development because interview procedures for prospective new staff include asking them to plan and then complete an activity with the children which is observed. Policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and

ability to make a positive contribution although some of the record keeping systems that support these are not consistently maintained.

The appropriate use of time, space and staff deployment supports children's care, learning and play. For example, the adult to child ratio is correctly maintained at all times and there are appropriate systems in place to provide emergency cover for unexpected staff absences. Resources in all rooms are stored at low level so that children can access them independently and the space within each room is utilised to provide a suitable range of play areas. Staff show good team working skills and ensure that the majority of their time is spent interacting with the children. Consequently, children's care, play and learning needs can be suitably met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Two people work closely together to share the role of nursery manager and their complimentary skills and knowledge allow them to function well as a team. They monitor the planning on a weekly basis to ensure that staff are providing appropriate experiences for children and carry out annual staff appraisals and quarterly supervision meetings to identify and discuss any training needs which will support the staff's expertise in delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum. In addition, staff use their daily evaluations of activities and the assessments and records of children's progress to begin to assess the strengths and some of the weaknesses of the provision for children's learning. Written feedback about the quality of the provision is also sought from parents and any identified issues are acted upon. Information about resultant changes are shared through newsletters and the parent notice boards.

Overall, children's needs are met.

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

At the last care inspection the nursery agreed to develop the outside play area to promote children's play, to review the organisation of meals and snack times to enhance children's social skills and to review the storage of toys and equipment to enable children to access them independently. They have now purchased new low-level storage units with baskets that children can easily pull out to access the toys inside. As a result, children are able to choose and select their own resources and this has improved the opportunities for them to develop confidence and independence. At snack and meal times staff are encouraged to sit and talk to the children so that eating becomes a social occasion. Where appropriate, they also encourage children to help to lay the table and to serve themselves with food. This has improved children's independence and is developing their social skills. The outside play area now has shapes and games painted on the floor as well as mobiles and insect boxes hanging in a tree and there is a small bench which allows children to sit and rest or to talk or play quietly together. This has provided a more stimulating environment for the children. The nursery is currently in the process of looking to refurbish this area again and in addition also wishes to improve the outside play resources.

After the last nursery education inspection the nursery agreed to review the staff's training needs in relation to the Foundation Stage. All staff now working with children who receive funding for nursery education are experienced practitioners and one is a qualified teacher. As a result, children's learning is planned and supported by knowledgeable staff. They also agreed to review the provision of activities and experiences which challenge the older and more able children particularly in respect of the programmes for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Older children now take part in a focused mathematical or

language and literacy activity on at least three mornings a week. As a result, their development in these areas of learning can be extended more appropriately.

The nursery also agreed to improve the short term planning and the use of assessments to inform the future planning of the next steps of the children's learning. The daily plans now clearly indicate the learning intention of adult-led activities and link these to the appropriate stepping stones of the Foundation Stage, so that it is clear to all staff what children are meant to be learning. In addition, observations and assessments of children's progression through the Foundation Stage are now recorded and discussed by the staff to decide if there are any areas of their development which need to be more fully supported. As a result, staff can plan and focus their teaching more effectively to ensure that children are making progress in all areas of the curriculum.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 there have been two complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. In the first complaint concerns were raised with regard to the ratio of staff to children. These concerns relate to National Standard 2: Organisation. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the premises as a result of which two actions were given to the provider. These were to provide a staffing contingency plan to cover emergencies and unexpected staff absences and to ensure that registers show the number of children present in each session and the arrival and departure times of staff in each room. The provider remained qualified for registration.

In the second complaint concerns were raised regarding injuries to a child attending the nursery. These concerns relate to National Standards 6: Safety, 7: Health and 11: Behaviour. Ofsted conducted a visit to discuss these concerns and were satisfied that the appropriate policies and procedures were in place and being followed. The provision was given one action to ensure that all accident and incidents records are clearly dated. A satisfactory response to this action was received and 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.

## **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):

- ensure that children are consistently encouraged to learn about personal hygiene throughout the daily routine

- ensure that the health and safety procedures which minimise the hazards to children on the premises, both inside and outside, are consistently carried out.

### **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):

- provide a greater variety of opportunities for children to develop their large motor skills (also applies to care)
- provide more opportunities for children to calculate and solve mathematical problems in everyday situations
- increase the opportunities for parents to understand how the activities provided by the nursery help children make progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage and how they can support their children's learning at home.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)