

Boxmoor Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	129332
Inspection date	28 January 2008
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
Setting Address	Cowper Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1PF
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Registered person	The Trustees of Boxmoor Private Nursery
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	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.

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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Boxmoor Pre-School is situated adjacent to Boxmoor JMI School within its own building and with separate grounds. It opened in 1975 and is run by a voluntary committee. It was registered in 1992. The provision consists of three rooms with a self-contained kitchen and adjacent toilets. The provision serves the local and wider community.

A maximum of 28 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 40 children from 2 to under 5 years on roll including funded 3- and 4-year-olds. All children share access to the outdoor play area. Sessions are offered each weekday from 09:00 to 15:00 during term time only. There is an option of a lunch club from 11:30 to 12:30.

The provision supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and is able to support children who speak English as an additional language. There are six staff directly working with the children, including the manager, and three hold recognised early years qualifications. Three staff are working towards recognised early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a stimulating environment where there is plenty of space and separate areas to offer a wide range of activities. Children's immediate safety, health and welfare is well promoted because staff understand and promote children's good health by being good role models and ensuring that their own knowledge is up to date. For example, staff attending training courses cascade that information to all the others, and any information obtained via other sources, such as the internet, is shared. There is good support from the committee which further enhances the care as additional information and training is sought for all staff. Children have ample opportunities to understand personal health and take full responsibility of their physical needs. This is consistently promoted as they wash and dry their hands independently before snacks or lunch and as they complete activities such as painting. Children observe posters that remind them to wash their hands and have free access to tissues when they have colds.

Children enjoy healthy and nutritious foods, including a broad range of fresh fruit and vegetables. They participate in activities such as growing cress and making sandwiches. Children participate in social snack times where they try new fruits and pass plates and jugs of drinks to each other around the tables. Many children attend the lunch club where they participate in a social meal time discussing the activities of the day. Children discuss how foods make them healthy and know that they should eat their savoury foods and fruits before enjoying sweeter treats. Children help themselves to water from the water cooler during the sessions showing that they understand the need for fluid during the day. This promotes their independence and development of health awareness. Children take part in planting and growing seeds and follow the growth with interest exploring the links between food, water and healthy development. These have included sunflowers, tulips, runner beans and pumpkins.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills and co-ordination as they participate in structured activities. These include movement sessions and activities planned around themed topics. Children move freely between the indoor and outside areas making independent choices. They have access to a complete curriculum of activities both indoors and outside because the setting has a large gazebo cover beneath which they offer children duplicate activities to those supplied indoors. Their physical movement is highly developed as they balance on beams, throw basket balls into a hoop and use a range of wheeled vehicles. Children were seen to enjoy the 'Velcro target and balls'. As they threw the balls, they began to problem-solve when not being able to reach the top to retrieve the balls; children rolled the target to enable the balls at the top to be at the bottom of the target. Children show that they can work together independently from adults. Children are becoming fully involved in the routines of the setting. Younger children are developing their independence physically and emotionally. They are active and becoming increasingly independent, acquiring control over their bodies and new physical skills. They are learning to express their needs and are beginning to meet those needs independently for example, by being able to access the toilets and washbasins themselves.

Children's general health and safety is fully supported by all relevant paperwork and records. Children's medical needs, both ongoing or of an emergency nature, are dealt with through clearly outlined procedures carried out by qualified staff. Clear methods of recording and procedures underpin all aspects of physical care. However, the accident records are not always

accurately completed or shared with parents and carers and this could compromise children's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's safety is given a high priority and risks of accidental injury are minimised because staff are vigilant and use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Policies, procedures and paperwork in this area are well planned and reviewed by the management to continue assessing any potential risks to children's safety. Children explore their environment safely because staff carry out daily safety checks, repeating these throughout the sessions to ensure continuing safety. They inform each other when they are moving around the areas of the premises at all times. In this way they ensure that the supervision of children is thorough and maintained.

Children have a firm understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves safe as they take part in regular emergency drills. They are given explanations by staff and understand the importance of listening to instructions in order to prevent accidents. Children take part in road safety activities where they use the surrounding areas to safely extend their awareness of traffic and roads. They also enjoy visitors to the setting who help them to focus on activities which support developing road safety awareness. Children learn, through activities and discussion with staff, to think about their immediate surroundings. For example, staff ask them to think about where to position large outdoor equipment, such as the basketball net, to ensure it is stable and does not block other children's play. This enables them to make predications and think about their surroundings.

Children are cared for in a welcoming setting where their work is creatively displayed on all areas and at child height. Continuous monitoring of the environment and staff's attention to detail ensures that children's access to play materials reaches a high standard of safety. This is further promoted by the provision of appropriate equipment such as correctly sized slides, play houses and climbing frame. There is an effective procedure, known by staff and parents, which prevents unknown persons from entering the building and this was seen to work in practice during the inspection. Perimeter areas of the setting are secured and clear guidelines for bolting gates ensure children's safety.

Children are protected because staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and the appropriate steps to follow in line with government guidelines. However, there has been some delay in implementing the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures into the policies and in it being used to improve staff knowledge. This means that consequently children's welfare is not fully protected. There are robust procedures for the induction of suitable staff and their ongoing suitability whilst employed by the group.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, secure and settled. They are eager to attend and participate in the activities and play opportunities provided. They settle eagerly when they arrive either in the morning or for the lunch club, and have a clear knowledge of the routine to follow. Children have a sense of belonging in the setting which is shown as they are welcomed by their friends, find and place their names on a board, and wave goodbye to children leaving at the end of a session. Children are confident in their relationships with each other and with staff, participating in discussions

and initiating conversations. Children and staff engage in discussions about a variety of topics, for example, talking about previous activities, discussing family members and new babies due to be born, or discussing what items they each have in their lunch boxes. These conversations help them to develop their social and communication skills. Staff understand how children learn and continually encourage, support and praise them. This helps children to become confident and seek out the activities.

Younger children are encouraged to become vocal through example and imitation and they begin to explore language to communicate their ideas. Staff take note of the early conversational skills of younger children by using clear eye contact to help children see that they are being listened to. Older children have a good use of language, they make requests, explain their thoughts and ideas, and take part in negotiation during their play. All children enjoy stories, songs and musical rhyme. They dress up in all manner of costumes which are not directed by their gender. Children develop play together into parties, dancing and picnics. They show that they have empathy for each other as they negotiate plans or remind each other 'not to wake the baby!'. They play instruments together both indoors and outside and enjoy having stories read to them. Children develop self-esteem and confidence because staff use lots of positive language followed with praise and encouragement for their achievements.

Children settle easily due to the staff's care, understanding and planning. They ensure that they have necessary information about children, including their likes and dislikes. Younger children's learning and development is promoted because staff have a sound understanding of child development. Assessment and developmental progress books have been introduced and assist the ongoing support to children. However, there is only a limited amount of information given to parents, and no displays showing parents how the framework is incorporated into the children's day, other than the planning which is on the notice board. Parents do not have opportunities to be fully involved in the children's development and this impacts on their learning opportunities.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and recognise how children learn most effectively. Children's progress in all areas is balanced because the manager has developed detailed planning which offers stimulating themes that are cross-referenced. For example when looking at lifecycles the activities have included observing tanks of tadpoles and frogs, mathematical craft activities linked to frogs and counting their limbs, play with frogs and lily pads, and stories and rhymes shared. However, the observations and information gained are not yet feeding into the planning which means that children's current interests and development is not used to extend their learning. The planning is not offering differentiation for individual children, nor is it evaluated following completion. This means that children may not be fully supported in reaching their potential.

Assessment of children receiving nursery education is linked to the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. Children's achievements are observed and recorded on either slips of paper or onto individual sheets. They have progress files which contain examples of their work which are then captioned linking them to the areas of learning. However, there is insufficient information to adequately gauge children's starting points and their subsequent progression. The observations made are not yet feeding directly into either the planning or children's files and there is no system that allows children's achievements to be monitored throughout their

time in the setting. Parental involvement is limited and they do not have regular opportunities to contribute to their children's learning.

Children show great enjoyment as they participate in the balanced range of activities. These include opportunities to engage in imaginative role play, exploration of natural substances such as wet and dry sand, and a wide variety of crafts and construction. Children independently enjoy trying out musical instruments where they learn about loud and soft sounds as they bang the drums and sing familiar nursery rhymes. They are beginning to use drama as they dance and express themselves when they move to the music they and others are making. For example, children and staff explore large movement with streamers, exploring music and beat, draw large shapes in the air, learn about positions such as high or low, left or right, and work together in a large group. Children explore creativity and art each day and have independent access to an extensive range of creative materials at all times. They use sponges and many sizes of brush to paint, build and create from modelling materials, and explore printing. Children mix paints from powder discussing quantities of powder and water, mixing and stirring the lumps and talk about thick or runny, as they take great care to prepare new materials for the group to use.

Children are confident using language to make their wants and needs known and to participate in discussions. They participate in negotiating turns with little help required and ask questions gaining knowledge of their developing skill with language. For example, they sing rhymes about what they are doing, such as 'we are going in the library, library, library' and show great enjoyment when choosing songs and singing alternative rhyming words to the same tunes. They show a very good developing knowledge of using new language and swapping words as they compare them. Children enjoy sharing their knowledge of sounds and letters and confidently offer words with initial sounds such as mummy, mop and mermaid for the letter 'M' when discussing the day of the week. There are ample opportunities for mark-making and some children, with the support of the manager, recognise initial letters of their names and attempt to write their names.

Children count confidently and use mathematical language and concepts throughout their daily play. For example, they speak confidently about items being big or bigger, explore pouring sand and water into different sized vessels, and compare and group objects by size, shape and colour. They explore addition and subtraction when singing and count easily from five to one when singing in groups. Children know that numbers can relate to age and most know their own ages of either three or four years whilst others can state the ages of their siblings. Children do not, however, become involved in regular group activities that provide them with opportunities to count and calculate in everyday situations. This prohibits their use of mathematics and continued development of number and reasoning.

Children are gaining a good knowledge of their community and the wider world through the provision of a range of resources and innovative activities. They have opportunities to explore the local environment through spring and autumn walks where they take part in nature trails and treasure hunts within the local community and the woodlands. Children have daily opportunities for using everyday technology through computers, remote controlled vehicles and robots. They use terms related to the computer with confidence talking about the 'mouse', 'clicking' and 'dragging' across the screen. They demonstrate that they are confident when exploring new technology and using it for a purpose. Children have some use of timers to develop their understanding of periods of time but these are not used frequently. Children talk about the daily routines and show that they understand routines within the day. Children are learning to be aware of the world around them and carry out some extensive activities relating

to recycling. These activities help them to become aware of both their local community and the wider effects of their actions on the world and their future.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full and active part in the pre-school because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities which promote their understanding of their local society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include themed works entitled 'people who help us', and 'all about me'. They celebrate a wide range of festivals and explore these through detailed posters, files of cultural dietary restrictions and activities. These celebrations include Wesak and Raksha Bandhan. Participation in realistic role play such as in the home corner enables children to gain a clear knowledge of their surroundings and make links with their own homes.

The provision fosters spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are kind and considerate to each other and to staff. Their behaviour is good throughout the sessions as they choose their activities. They organise turn-taking between themselves and acknowledge to others that they had agreed to swap at certain times; they then do this promptly. They understand that their behaviour affects others as is shown when they spontaneously say they are 'sorry' when accidents happen. Children are able to feel secure as staff make efforts to understand significant events in their lives and anticipate the possible disruption these may bring. These include the birth of new babies to the family and events which happen within the extended family. Children who attend other settings before arriving at the pre-school benefit from very good relationships between the settings. This enables activities to be planned to complement those offered earlier in the day and to enable children to have their complete well-being addressed. Provision is in place to allow those children needing rests to sleep uninterrupted.

Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified as there is a practical policy relating to this and staff ensure that this is implemented, working sensitively with individual children and parents to make sure that all are included in the activities and routines. They welcome other professionals to the setting where they work with them to develop plans for the children which are fully shared with parents and carers. This ensures that parents and carers are recognised as the primary carers for children. Children with English as an additional language receive good support as staff work hard to establish working relationships with parents and extended family. For example, they explore alternative methods of communication such as dual language labels around the setting and requesting translation from parents and carers. They have used photograph prompts to good effect, have explored signing to support the developing spoken word and sought the advice of translators to ensure that they are fully prepared to meet the needs of children and families.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. There is a commitment to involving parents in the setting. Parents are kept well informed through regular newsletters and have access to their children's files and assessment records. Informative notice-boards include the current themes and activities, snack and meal menus, health and safety issues and planning for the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage. However, other than the information given to parents initially about the Foundation Stage and the displayed planning, there is no ongoing method to involve parents and carers in the learning of their children. They have only verbal opportunities to contribute to the

development plans for their children and have no involvement in any detailed entry profile for the children which would form the basis of any planning for progression for children. This prohibits parental involvement in the children's development.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children benefit from the care provided by dedicated staff. Their daily comfort and enjoyment is enhanced by the organisation and the attention to all details relating to their care and well-being. Children's varying needs are consistently met and they are offered a broad, planned range of activities and play opportunities. The setting has separate areas which may be used according to activity or area of learning, and operates family grouping effectively across the varying attendance by children for differing sessions throughout the day. Children are able to move safely and independently confidently initiating their own play and learning.

Children's welfare and safety are promoted through the setting's clearly defined policies and procedures and the daily monitoring of these. However, the procedures set in place for security, such as the record of visitors and the accident record are not always used effectively. This potentially compromises the safety of children. There is a very good induction process for new staff, providing information and support. This continues through the staff supervisory system, which ensures that training needs are identified and staff are able to work appropriately with all children. Staff continue to extend their knowledge through training, being part of focus and training groups, research, and planning for the forthcoming Early Years Foundation Stage.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for nursery education is satisfactory. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the good understanding that the manager has of her role and responsibilities. She ensures that she is aware of all regulations, carrying out research and reviews to implement any changes and carefully studying the implications of these to both children and staff. The manager acts as an excellent role model and staff are motivated because of this and the clear direction they receive. All daily sessions are very well planned, with a balanced range of opportunities throughout the day. Staff pay attention to what children are doing and ensure that they are always given sufficient time and resources to complete their activities and tasks. Staff meet regularly to discuss future work, and thereby ensure that the needs of individual children are met. There are, however, areas that require attention. These relate to procedures for planning, assessment and partnership with parents and carers to ensure that children continue to develop and meet their full potential.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection for care the provider was asked to review children's records to ensure that information supplied enabled equality of opportunity to be addressed and to extend the practice surrounding snacks to offer increased learning opportunities.

Since that time the registration forms have been updated and include opportunities for parents and carers to supply information pertinent to individual children. This enables each child's needs to be recognised and their well-being assured. The planning surrounding meals and snacks has been extended to enable children to continue learning and to support their development of independence.

At the last inspection for nursery education the provider was asked to improve staff's knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and to extend the long term plans to broaden children's experiences.

Since that time staff have continued to attend training courses and to review their current practice by research. They have broadened the planning to offer children additional and inventive activities through broader topics. These actions have ensured that children are offered stimulating activities by staff that enable them to work towards reaching their full potential.

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 good. 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 all documentation is maintained and used appropriately; this refers to the accident records being signed and dated by parents and carers, and the regular use of the visitors' record
- update and improve staff's knowledge and all procedures relating to Local Safeguarding Children Board.

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 more opportunities for children to count and calculate in everyday situations
- develop and extend the planning to clearly show how children will achieve the intended learning. Show the staff role and resources. Use the information gained by evaluating activities completed, and through assessment, to plan for all individual children showing differentiation for less or more able children
- develop children's assessment records to help them move onto the next stage in their learning, ensuring that parents have opportunities to contribute so that they know about their child's progress. Ensure that development is led by a baseline profile showing

areas of learning to enable children's progress to be supported by the planning fed from observations and assessment.

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