

Bassingbourn Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	221917
Inspection date	30 October 2007
Inspector	Kerry Freshwater
Setting Address	The Mobile, Brook Road, Bassingbourn, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 5NP
Telephone number	07749 774494
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Registered person	The Trustees of Bassingbourn Pre-School
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?

Bassingbourn pre-school opened in 1970 and operates from two rooms in a purpose-built mobile building. It is situated in the village of Bassingbourn. A maximum of 25 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.45 to 11.15 and from 11.45 to 14.45 for 38 weeks of the year. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 40 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 29 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and also children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs six staff. Five members of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from a clean, hygienic environment where regular cleaning routines are in place to prevent the spread of infection. For example, antibacterial cleaners are used to wipe down tables and children are reminded to flush toilets after use. Effective procedures and practices are in place to promote children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Staff obtain all necessary information and consents from parents relating to children's health and diet to ensure appropriate care can be given. Staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications. Children are excluded if they are unwell or suffering from a contagious illness so that others can be protected from infection.

Children are learning the importance of good health and hygiene as they follow daily routines, which include washing their hands regularly using liquid soap and paper towels. They are reminded to shield their mouths when coughing and dispose of dirty tissues correctly. They chat about hand washing and learn how to rub in the soap properly to ensure that hands are clean. Children learn about healthy living as they talk about healthy foods and the need for fresh air and exercise. They help to prepare different fruits for snack and refer to posters displayed showing different fruit and vegetables. Children enjoy healthy snack foods, such as fruit and vegetables and are encouraged to bring healthy foods in their packed lunches. Children serve themselves from the snack bar spooning out raisins and selecting the other items to place in their bowls. Staff are aware of the risks of allergies, encouraging children to eat their own foods and reminding parents not to provide any foods containing nuts. Children benefit from a rolling snack time which enables them to continue their play and eat when they are hungry.

Children enjoy a broad variety of daily activities which enable them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills. They confidently climb on the apparatus, ride cars and scooters, play hopscotch and crawl through the tunnel. Indoors children complete puzzles, manipulate play dough and build with various construction equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have easy and safe access to a wide range of quality resources which are stimulating and suitable for their stage of development. They are enthusiastic in their play and enjoy freely selecting from the range of equipment available. Children benefit from a good range of safety measures. For example, daily and annual risk assessments are carried out to the indoor and outdoor areas, staff ensure that the kitchen door is kept closed and hot drinks remain in the kitchen. The premises are secure and an alarm has been fitted to fire exit doors to inform staff if the door is opened. Fire safety equipment is in place and fire drills are carried out every half term. Drills are recorded, however, the records are not sufficient to enable staff to reflect on the practise. This means that staff may not be fully informed of effective procedures to follow in emergency situations.

Children quickly learn to keep themselves safe through activities, discussion and gentle guidance. They know how to play safely indoors and out, learning about safe ways to carry scissors and how to use the stapler safely. Through topic work staff introduce the idea of traffic dangers and ask children for possible solutions. Children learn to find a safe place to cross, hold hands with an adult, look, listen and stop. They know that the road is not a place to play. Children

dress up as the lollypop person to assist each other. Children know that they need to walk indoors as there are more things to bump into. Staff use bonfire night to help children to understand about hazards of fire. Children create a large bonfire picture and learn that they should never touch fire in case they get burnt.

Children are well protected from possible abuse or neglect. Some staff members have attended child protection training and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities. A detailed policy and the required government and local authority guidance is in place should any concerns arise.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in high quality activities throughout the session. They are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other. They choose independently and are gaining in confidence, asking questions and chatting with staff. They play happily together and are learning to take turns and respond to others as they participate in activities together. Children's achievements are greatly improved by staff's awareness of their development. They become confident communicators as they share ideas in their play, for instance as they build with various construction materials, play with the train track together and enjoy their pretend play in the home corner. Children play very well together and negotiate their roles as they make use of the large wooden car. Singing and musical activities improve their communication skills. Children make connections in their learning as they freely explore the textures of sand, water, paint and 'Gelli Baff'. They experiment with ice and learn that warm hands melt the ice. Regular use of a wide range of creative materials, including paint, collage and drawing materials, Play-Doh and cookery ingredients encourages children to express their feelings and ideas in a variety of ways. They paint freely, print with leaves and use tissue paper, glue, material and sequins to make a woodland scene for the three pigs pantomime. Children listen to the story and re-enact it together. Children acquire new experiences and knowledge and develop their understanding of the natural environment through interesting activities. For example, they enjoy a walk around the local area collecting leaves, twigs and other natural items to create pictures, they create a polar region using ice, plastic animals, plants, sand and earth and talk about the natural changes and the consequences to plants and animals.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are progressing extremely well, supported by the staff team's strong commitment to their early learning. Staff demonstrate a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage which enables them to support children's learning. Planning systems are detailed and all areas of learning are well covered. Staff identify assessment opportunities and look at ways that children can be extended and supported depending on their needs and abilities. Ongoing observations are used to plan the next steps for children's learning and ensure that children's learning is continually challenged. Activities are evaluated to enable staff to adapt activities to meet the needs of all children and extend them appropriately. Children's achievements are clearly linked to the stepping stones and included in future planning to ensure all children are given the support and guidance that they need.

Children are engaged and motivated by a wide range of stimulating, practical activities related to their needs. They access a variety of good quality resources, which support their learning across the Foundation Stage. Children are enthusiastic, keen to learn, self-assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. Their independence skills are effectively promoted as they serve themselves from the snack bar, spooning out raisins and selecting the other items

to place in their bowls. They clear away what they have left scooping food into the recycle bin and stacking their bowls. Children use the toilet, wash their hands, pour their own drinks and put on their coats and shoes independently. They learn to share and take turns as they play games and enjoy different toys together. They confidently contribute their ideas and happily talk about their home experiences. Children listen to stories such as, 'The Gruffalo' and 'Going on a bear hunt', with interest and enthusiasm, participating well in group discussions. They take part in activities linked with the stories that they have heard. For example, creating a woodland scene for their own version of the three little pigs. Children use marks readily to represent their ideas as they paint, write and draw. This increases their opportunities to develop their early writing skills. There are limited opportunities for children to link sounds to letters in activities which means that more able children may not be fully extended with their early reading skills.

Children are highly imaginative. They enjoy role play games using dressing-up clothes and the other resources that make up each new role play area. For example, the home corner, grocers, café and office. Children are beginning to make sense of the world around them as they learn about their surroundings and other people. They watch the adjacent building site and imitate what the builders are doing. Through topic work, they learn about recycling and looking after the environment. Children sing songs about caring for the environment, create a recycling collage picture, sort plastic and paper and separate left over food to the correct bin for recycling. Children learn about things that can go back to the earth, they use water to soften card and bread enough to be broken up and mixed into the compost. They do the same experiment with non-degradable items to illustrate their findings. Children also learn about composting and how the worms help to make the compost. Children develop an understanding of different cultures and celebrate the festivals of others. For example, as they find out about the Divali story, they make diva pots and greetings cards. Children develop their understanding of the local and natural environment as they go for walks around the outside area. They use the leaves and twigs that they have collected to create a large bonfire picture, individually selecting what they want to add to the picture and applying it themselves to the display, also adding different items of their choice from the craft trolley. Through the bonfire activity children learn about the effects of fire to wood and find out the changes to wood once it has been burnt. They listen with interest as a member of staff talks about the changes from wood to burnt wood, charcoal and ash. Children develop their creative skills as they look at colours and carry out a range of colour related activities. They enjoy painting, printing, forming different patterns and creating colourful collage pictures using a range of different materials. They participate enthusiastically in action songs and rhymes. Children are inquisitive and enjoy exploring different textures such as sand, water and Play-Doh.

Children work well together and enjoy each other's company. They respond well to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. They become confident with number as they count enthusiastically from one to 10, they count the spoonfuls of ingredients as they make cookie houses and think about how many there would be if one more is added. Children follow instructions as they move their bodies in different ways to a pre-selected number. For example, four 'reach-up-highs', six 'jumps' and seven 'reach-down-lows'. Children learn about weights and measures as they sort and order objects by weight, height and length as part of a recycling activity. They begin to recognise different numbers as they complete puzzles and look at door numbers. They select the numbers that match the ones that they have been shown. Children learn to identify and match different shapes as they play with different construction equipment, naming the different shapes as they go along. Children gain opportunities to develop their physical skills through a wide range of activities and use a variety of equipment. They participate in jumping and stretching games as

part of a PE session. Children stretch as wide as a house, reach up and down, jump like a jack-in-the-box, take elephant steps and tip-toe like a mouse. Outside they ride various wheeled toys, enjoy games with hoops and balls and climb on the apparatus. Indoors they confidently cut with scissors, complete puzzles and construct with different resources. This develops their confidence and abilities to co-ordinate their bodies.

Staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help them achieve their full potential. They use appropriate systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements and to plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all warmly welcomed into the setting and are highly valued as individuals. They develop a strong sense of belonging and learn about their own and other's needs, through topics and interaction from the staff. Purposeful resources reflect the world and local community and give children a clear understanding about different cultures and the lives of those around us. They begin to appreciate the customs and cultures of others as they learn about different festivals and celebrations. For example, they make diva lamps and learn about the Divali story and they taste different foods for Chinese new year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is very good. They play very well together and clearly enjoy each other's company. They are encouraged to take turns and share resources with their friends. A timer is used as and when needed to support the turn taking process. Children are polite and use 'please' and 'thank you' readily. Staff manage children well and have high expectations for their behaviour. They provide good role models, by showing the children respect, talking calmly and quietly to them at all times and this is reflected in the calm atmosphere generated within the sessions. Children are given the opportunity to discuss and resolve issues amongst themselves but staff are close at hand to intervene, where necessary. Children are therefore developing good social skills and clearly understand what is required of them.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff form good relationships with parents and ensure that they work together to meet children's individual needs. New parents receive an informative prospectus, which tells them about the setting and some information relating to the curriculum. However, information relating to the Foundation Stage is not sufficient in detail to give parents a clear understanding about what and how children are learning as they progress through the stepping stones. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's learning, through written plans, individual play plans and the shared library book system. They are informed what children are doing and are encouraged to share their knowledge, skills and ideas with the group. Staff ensure that regular discussions with parents and daily diaries keep them fully informed of their children's progress. Parents' comments are valued and questionnaires have been devised for parents to complete relating to the setting, environment and children's learning. Parents are generally very positive about the group, staff, the premises and what their children are learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with a strong knowledge and understanding of child development. The majority of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and staff attend training to update and enhance their skills. They are committed to continually improving the care and education that they provide. Consequently, children's development is enhanced. Staff form a strong, efficient and well-organised team, who work very well together and have a high regard for the well-being of all children. They are aware of their roles and responsibilities, which ensures that sessions run efficiently and smoothly. The available space is very well organised, to allow children independence and to maximise their play opportunities. Children are able to select different activities and resources during the session. This ensures that they are stimulated and their interest is maintained throughout their time at pre-school. Children's care, learning and play is therefore well supported.

All of the necessary documentation for the safe and efficient management of the provision is in place and record keeping systems are very well used to meet children's needs. In addition, the group's policies and procedures work well in practice, to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Children's arrival and departure times are recorded appropriately which means that staff are fully aware of the numbers of children they are accountable for. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is good. There is a good, clear leadership from the manager, who is usually available at every session to interact with children, support staff and meet with parents. The manager oversees the planning and regular staff meetings are held to allow staff the chance to identify and discuss any issues they may have, concerning the curriculum or children's learning. This enables staff to reflect on their practice and to assess both their own and the setting's strengths and weaknesses. Children have access to appropriate play and learning opportunities, which meet their needs and help them to progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 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):

- develop fire drill records to enable staff to reflect on the practise more effectively, for example, by recording the time taken, number of children and staff and any general comments.

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):

- increase opportunities for children to link sounds to letters in everyday activities
- continue to develop methods of sharing information with parents about the Foundation Stage to enable them to contribute further to their children's learning.

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