

Bluebird Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 253632

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Inspector Heidi Falconer

Setting Address Westfield County Primary School, Westbourne Park, Bourne,
Lincolnshire, PE10 9QS

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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?

Bluebird Playgroup is privately owned and opened over 30 years ago. It operates from a mobile building within the grounds of Bourne Westfield Primary School in the town of Bourne, Lincolnshire. A maximum of 18 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 08.45 to 15.30 during school term time. The setting offers morning and afternoon sessions in addition to full daycare. 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, 35 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup employs seven members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure that children receive appropriate care in the event of an illness or an accident. For example, all staff hold paediatric first aid certificates and records are maintained of all accidents and medication administered to children.

Children are developing a generally sound understanding of good personal hygiene routines. For example, as they talk about why they need to wash their hands they say 'we wash our hands so that we don't get germs on our biscuits' and 'if the germs get into our tummies they make us poorly'. However, hand washing routines before snack time do not fully protect children from the risk of cross infection. This is because all children wash their hands in the same bowl of water and dry their hands on a shared towel, although the setting have running water and paper towels in the toilet area.

Children are suitably nourished. Drinks and snacks are offered routinely during the morning and afternoon sessions, and parents provide a packed lunch for the children who stay all day. However, snack is generally limited to a plain biscuit and therefore does not encourage healthy eating. Staff are well informed about any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies. Parents detail this information on their child's registration form and prior to any cooking activities staff check that this information is up to date. This practice helps to maintain children's safety and good health.

Children's physical skills are developing well. Activities to develop small movements are encouraged through regular use of a variety of tools and equipment. For example, children use hammers and nails on cork boards to nail in shapes and they use plastic knives in the play dough to cut up their 'cakes'. Outdoors children use wheeled toys, climbing frames and balancing equipment which develop their larger physical skills. Children demonstrate an awareness of space as they ride around the road track on the playground, manoeuvring their bikes and scooters to avoid obstacles and collisions with others.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The premises are made welcoming and friendly to children and their parents. At the start of each session children are greeted on arrival by staff, who show an interest in them and what they have to say. The premises are warm, clean, and provide suitable space for children to move around freely and comfortably. Children have access to a good range of suitable and safe toys and resources which are maintained in good condition.

Children's risk of injury is reduced as staff take good precautions to keep them safe. For example, external doors are locked during session times, heaters have appropriate guards and cleaning products are inaccessible to children. To further keep children safe there are clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of the building and fire drills are carried out periodically to ensure that all children and staff are familiar with the routine. Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are checked regularly and are maintained in working order. Staff supervise children well both indoors and outdoors, and when they enter and leave the premises, ensuring their safety at all times

Children are developing a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe through consistent routines and regular discussions with staff. For example, as a member of staff lights candles on a birthday cake, she asks the children 'Can you tell me anything about matches?' Children reply 'You don't touch them because they may hurt you'.

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and are clear of their role to safeguard children. They are familiar with the possible signs of abuse and know who to contact if they have a concern. A child protection policy is in place, this is made available to parents to make them aware of the group's responsibilities to safeguard children. However, this policy does not reflect changes in current legislation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and display high levels of self-esteem. This is a consequence of being cared for by an enthusiastic staff team who evidently enjoy spending time with them. As children play staff sit with them and interact positively, extending their learning and thinking. For example, as children look for clothes for a teddy bear to wear, staff ask them open ended questions such as 'Is this too big?' and 'Do you think this one will fit?'. When children say 'I need a tape measure to measure it' staff support them in finding a tape measure and measuring the bear.

All children are involved in a wide range of activities which ensures that they enjoy their time at the playgroup. The start of each session is structured into group activities whilst the latter part of the session is based on free play activities. Children listen well to stories and are keen to join in with actions and recalling familiar parts of the story. For example, children are particularly animated by the story 'We're going on a bear hunt', moving their arms as the characters go through the 'Swishy swash' grass.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have secure knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a wide range of learning experiences across all areas of learning. Key activities are planned well, detailing how the activity will be carried out, the language that staff wish to promote and the questions that will be asked. This allows all staff to carry these out consistently. These activities are evaluated to inform future planning. However, they do not show how older or more able children will be extended in these activities. Staff observe, monitor and record the children's progress in a variety of ways. For example, they carry out planned and spontaneous observations of children and some examples of children's work are kept in a 'work book'.

Children listen well and enjoy talking about the things which interest them such as their trips to 'Disneyland Paris' to see 'Mickey Mouse'. They demonstrate that they understand that print carries meaning as they point to writing on the blackboard and say 'That long word says Wednesday'. Most children recognise their names and some older children are starting to write them.

Children use mathematical language in their play to describe shape, size, quantity and capacity. For example, as they sort buttons and pour them into bags and containers they use words such as 'tiny, large, small, full' and 'empty'. Staff use daily activities and routine to promote children's mathematical development. For example, each morning the children take turns to count the

number of children present and develop an understanding of calculation as they are asked 'How many children do we have if we add the number of boys and girls together?'

Children are keen to explore resources and show an interest in how things work. As they use motorised cars they explain how they have to 'push it down' to make it go. Children show an awareness of everyday technology. They understand how to operate simple programmes on the computer and use play telephones, echo microphones and shopping trolleys with scanners in their play. Children develop a good awareness of how the local environment is being developed through visits to the school, walks and visitors from the community such as fire-fighters and the lollypop lady.

Children form good relationships with each other and often seek out others to play with. For example, they suggest ideas about where they could play saying 'Shall we go and play in the office together?' Children's independence is generally promoted well; they are encouraged to put on their own coats to play outside and help to give out cups and biscuits at snack time. However, children are not able to serve themselves drinks.

Children are encouraged to listen to and identify sounds. For example, they are able to match the sound of a musical instrument being played by a member of staff from behind a box, with a selection of instruments which are in front of them. Children take part in a range of planned creative activities but there are fewer opportunities for them to access creative resources freely on a daily basis. This restricts their ability to explore different types of media and materials. Imaginative play is popular and there are suitable resources to support this. As children play outside on the boat structure they call out 'shark, shark, quick reverse the boat' and balance along the beams saying 'shiver me timbers'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Information about the Foundation Stage is available to parents in the prospectus, and newsletters keep parents informed of topics and special events at the playgroup. Parents are invited to look at their children's assessment records and workbooks. However, although parents are satisfied that staff keep them informed about their child's progress, there are few opportunities for them to contribute to the assessment records. All children at the setting benefit from the positive relationships that staff develop with their parents. Parents speak highly of the setting and staff who care for their children. A range of information is provided for new and established families. These included policies which are on display in the entrance area, a parents' folder and the setting's prospectus.

Staff respect children's individuality and offer extra support to enable each of them to participate at an equal level. Parents speak highly of the way that staff adapt routines to accommodate their children's individual needs. The key worker system works well as staff are aware of children's individual needs. Children are allocated key workers a few weeks after they start at the setting, this gives staff time to see which member of staff they have naturally bonded with. This helps the children to feel secure. There are currently no children on roll with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the playgroup has appropriate systems in place to monitor and support children as necessary.

Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered. They are learning about the world they live in, other people's cultures and beliefs as they participate in activities to learn about their local community and different festival celebrations around the world. For

example, they attend school assemblies for events such as the Harvest Festival and Easter. Additionally, children have access to a range of resources such as puzzles, dolls and small world figures that increase their awareness of diversity. Children's behaviour is very good and they understand what is expected of them. This is because staff apply boundaries consistently and always give children explanations as to why some behaviour is not appropriate.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. For example, references are always obtained and until all of the required checks are back staff are not left unsupervised with the children. Staff have a positive attitude to ongoing training and regularly attend short courses. This ensures that they have effective skills to support the children in their care. An appraisal system has just been introduced to help identify future training needs.

Children receive good levels of care as staff clearly enjoy their work and are deployed effectively. The sessions are organised well to allow children to take part in a range of activities indoors and outdoors. All of the required documentation is in place. However, some policies do not reflect current legislation and not all documents are easily accessible. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The owner has developed good links with the local school which helps to ensure that children have a smooth transition as they start school. The management team have ensured that the points for consideration from the last inspection have been met and they are aware of the setting's strengths and weaknesses.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the playgroup was asked to: develop the records that they keep of fire drills; ensure that there is a procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost; keep written records of medication which have been administered; and keep a record of existing injuries.

A lost child policy is now in place and now included in the fire drills records are details of the times taken to exit the building. These procedures which have been put in place help to maintain children's safety at the group. Written records of existing injuries and parent's permission to administer medication are now kept. This supports children's health and safety at the group.

At the last education inspection no key issues were identified but they were given two points for consideration. These were to increase opportunities for children to use information and communication technology to support their learning and to develop curriculum plans and assessment records.

Since the last inspection the group have developed their assessment records so that they clearly show children's achievements. The curriculum plans now contain more detail about the learning objectives of activities to help staff promote learning in activities. Children now have increased opportunities to learn about and use information and communication technology as the group have purchased two computers and have a variety of resources for children to use in their play. This supports their learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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 children's health by ensuring that they consistently follow good hygiene routines when washing their hands before eating and enjoy a variety of nutritious snacks
- improve the organisation of documentation to ensure that it is easily accessible and review written policies and procedures to ensure that they are up to date and in line with current legislation, with particular reference to child protection and complaints.

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):

- improve the system for assessments so that individual next steps are identified and implement a system to enable parents and carers to contribute to these
- extend opportunities for children to be independent with particular regard to serving themselves at snack time and being able to access creative activities freely.

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