

Boxmoor Hall Pre School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY289559
Inspection date	03 December 2007
Inspector	Sheila Harrison
Setting Address	Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre, Park Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1JS
Telephone number	01442 240902
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Registered person	Boxmoor Hall Pre-School Management Committee
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?

Boxmoor Hall Pre-School opened in Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre in 2004 having been running for 30 years in a nearby hall. A voluntary committee, including parents, manages the setting. It operates from one room within the centre. Other users share the room when the pre-school is not operating. The provision is situated close to the town centre and children attend from the local area.

There are currently 36 children from two years to four years on roll. This includes eight funded three-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and is willing to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:15 until 12:15. A lunch club operates from 12:15 to 13:15.

Seven part-time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the local authority, is a part of the 'Pathfinder'

scheme for flexible funding of childcare and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLSA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are protected from the spread of infection as they are encouraged to put their hands over their mouths when they cough, to independently access the tissues to wipe their own noses. They wash their hands after the toilet and before cookery sessions. They use hand wipes before snack and this gives staff suitable chances to explain the importance of personal hygiene. Their health is adequately protected as over half the staff have first aid training and other first aiders are available to be called upon from the sports centre. The setting has suitable procedures and records for accidents, medication and sickness. Staff have a sensitive procedure when changing the nappies of the young children.

Children are suitably nourished, at snack time they independently pour their milk and they have a small piece of bread stick and some raisins. Parents are encouraged to donate fruit to share. However, this means fruit is not always available to promote healthy growth. There is a suitable system for parents to give information on allergies and this is easily accessible to the staff. Older children learn about healthy eating as they enjoying playing a board game where there is a reaction to unhealthy food.

Over the week, children will have some opportunities to develop their physical skills within the routine. They will have the chance to use the challenging climbing frame and participate in music and movement sessions. During the lunch club, some children exercise vigorously using the tricycles and sit and ride toys. In the better weather children will have the use of a small garden. However, vigorous exercise and large physical skills are not always included in the planning of activities. Consequently, opportunities are missed for children to feel the positive benefits of being active.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and carers are welcomed into a bright and cheerful environment. There is a secure system as children enter and leave the hall at the beginning and end of the session. Their safety is protected as during a cookery activity, staff arrange the table so the children cannot access the hot kettle. There are effective systems to report any defects to the premises, recording visitors and daily risk assessments. Children are accompanied to the toilets as they are shared with other users of the sports centre. Staff are vigilant to ensure that two cubicles are solely for the use of the children. There is a useful system using 'walkie talkies' to ensure the safety of staff and children as they move around the whole premises.

Children benefit from the organisation of the premises as they have the space they need for varied activities. Staff set up the equipment before the start of the session to ensure children are quickly interested and engaged. There is a valuable use of screens to help children concentrate in small groups. These are decorated with posters and photographs of the children at play and this supports their sense of belonging. The resources are appealing to children, appropriate to their age and stage of development and are constructed of both man-made and

natural materials. Staff predetermine the toys available from a wide range stored in the cupboards. These are suitably sorted and labelled. Toys are regularly checked for safety.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff gently remind the children of the consequences of their actions. They are familiar with the fire evacuation procedures. Children's welfare is adequately safeguarded as staff are aware of the child protection policy and know who to contact if there are any concerns. Procedures have recently been updated after the staff attended child protection training.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and eager to participate. They quickly become involved with the staff and the toys to help them confidently leave their parents and carers. The routine of the setting is evaluated and changed to meet the needs of the younger children. Close and caring relationships increase the children's sense of trust. Their early communication skills being well supported through the key-worker scheme and at small group times. Staff are sensitive to the needs of the younger children and adapt the activities to ensure children are involved, for example, during a cookery activity young children enjoy putting many cherries on the top of the cake. Toys and equipment is provided to help the younger children succeed. They can handle the puzzles with large pieces and enjoy seeing the picture underneath.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children flourish as staff have an effective knowledge of the areas of learning and stepping stones within the Foundation Stage and use this knowledge to plan a balanced and purposeful routine. Evaluations are used to inform future planning. Staff are aware of how children learn. They regularly observe the children with each child's progress recorded in relation to the stepping stones. Children's individual talents are noticed, checked to ensure the security of the observation and specific activities are developed to ensure they move to the next steps in their learning. However, some learning styles are not fully acknowledged as several children are not fully engaged in completing the worksheets. Staff plan interesting activities adapting them to ensure an appropriate level of challenge. They are aware of the children's interests and generally follow these when interacting with them. For example, a staff member with a small group of children made a large model of a dinosaur from playdough. Children behave well and show great pride in their achievements. This is acknowledged and recorded by staff offering to photograph the child standing beside their models. As a result children are motivated and make good links in their learning.

Staff are well deployed and encourage children to talk confidently in large and small groups. Children can recognise their names and handle books carefully in the suitably stocked book area. They have valuable chances to see written labels within the environment including scripts in other languages. They are confident in counting, they count groups of children and in some number rhymes. They create patterns in their play and have some chances to write numbers. Children have useful opportunities to investigate the properties of different ingredients as during a cookery activity, older children observe the changes as chocolate melts when warm and hardens when cool. Children competently use small tools as they concentrate for long periods of time cutting out small pieces of paper. Staff show the children how to use a sieve to sprinkle icing sugar on their cakes. They experiment joining materials in two and three dimensions as they make models from recycled materials including boxes and coloured cellophane paper. Children have useful chances to use a suitable home play area and occasionally staff

change this area to a shop or post office to help children extend their play based on their own experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel valued and are developing secure relationships as staff are readily available to welcome children and parents on an individual basis. Their independence is suitably encouraged as children can pour their drink at snack time and choose from a wide range of toys that staff make available. Children are beginning to understand their own needs and to respect the needs of others. They help each other at the computer and happily let a younger child have a turn. Staff introduce valuable strategies to help children take turns when they are having difficulty waiting at the slide. They have the opportunity to play alone or in small groups and are beginning to form friendships. Children respond quickly for requests of good behaviour, such as helping tidying up. Staff provide consistent and useful role models for children. Praise is freely given to the children ensuring they understand when they have done well. Good manners are encouraged and children respond suitably with 'please' and 'thank you' without prompting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are adequately supported as staff are well informed of appropriate support strategies to identify and support children's individual needs. Staff regularly attend suitable training and they seek advice from outside agencies when necessary. Children are learning about the wider world as they discuss the weather outside. They acknowledge important events in their lives and some festivals. Children enjoy making, with the staff's support, celebration cards and potting bulbs to take home as gifts. They are encouraged to feel valued and free from discrimination as the play materials reflect diversity and show positive images of boys and girls.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. They are provided with a wide range of information on the setting including information on the Foundation Stage. They receive regular newsletters. Posters and term's plans are displayed. Staff are aware of the children's developmental starting point as parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child as they complete a questionnaire before starting. Parents are well informed on their child's achievements through the effective key-worker system and any individual needs are quickly discussed and dealt with. Parents and family members contribute fully to the children's learning as they visit the setting to introduce details of festivals important to them. Children are enthusiastically involved in seeing the Diwali lights, smelling the incense and sharing foods linked to their culture.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are content and settled in the setting. Their needs are met through generally effective organisation. Staff understand and follow the suitable policies. However, the recruitment and vetting procedure is not robustly carried out to support children's security. Staff are conscientious and have a long term commitment to the setting. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of childcare with professional childcare qualifications and they attend a range of short courses. Staff are well deployed to meet the child:adult ratios. They have good arrangements for exchange of information with parents. This helps children feel valued and staff to understand the needs of individual children.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Children benefit from the positive and proactive approach of staff who are committed to improving the education of children. They have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage as they evaluate the effectiveness of the planned activities. Staff monitor children's use of the equipment. They have changed the seating and position of the reading area to encourage children to use this area more frequently. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to extend their knowledge of the National Standards in order to fully evaluate the provision and to review the staff deployment to enhance children's concentration skills. Children's well-being is promoted as the setting has reviewed the policies and procedures and ensures registers are completed as children arrive. This includes the time of entry or departure if children arrive or leave early. Staff ensure children's concentration is enhanced as they are well deployed with the children. Noise is kept to a minimum to allow children to listen carefully to stories in a large group and each staff member sits with a small group of children at snack time to allow children to fully participate in the small group activity.

At the last education inspection the setting agreed to extend the use of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' and develop opportunities for the children to have sufficient exercise and learn in a larger more active style. Challenges to children are adequately supported as staff use the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage' to plan activities using the areas of learning and stepping stones. Staff visit a local primary school to seek advice and guidance on the Foundation Stage curriculum. The active learning styles of some children are recognised but not fully implemented in small group times potentially limiting some of their enthusiasm to learn. Children have some opportunities to develop their physical skills within the routine although vigorous exercise and large physical skills are not included in the planning of activities for this term. This potentially means that children are not fully encouraged to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that 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):

- review opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and begin to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active (also for nursery education)
- review the recruitment and vetting procedure to ensure staff caring for the children are suitable to do so.

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):

- develop opportunities for the children to learn in a larger more active style.

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