

Bright Beginnings

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	126993
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Inspector	Mandy Mooney
Setting Address	Dering Way, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2JJ
Telephone number	01322 629487
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Registered person	North West Kent College Nursery
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 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?

Bright Beginnings opened in 2004, having moved from other rooms within the college site. It is set in the grounds of the North West Kent College, currently located in a temporary building until their permanent base is completed. The provision is owned by the college.

The nursery offers full day care on week days from 08.15 until 18.00 and serves students attending the college and the public, and is open all year round. An after school club runs from 15.15 until 18.00 during term times and a holiday play scheme runs from 08.15 until 18.00. There are 121 children on roll, of these 30 receive nursery education funding. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as a second language. The holiday play scheme was not observed during this inspection.

Seventeen staff work directly with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualification. The nursery is a Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) associated group and receive support and training from the Local Authority. They are in the process of completing the Kent Quality Assurance Scheme.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a suitably clean environment. Appropriate cleaning routines carried out by staff, such as, wiping down surfaces with anti-bacterial spray contribute to minimising the potential for cross contamination. Outdoor shoes are removed in the baby room to minimise cross infection, however, this is not implemented consistently and prams are rolled into the room. Staff follow appropriate hygiene routines when changing nappies, this includes, wearing disposable aprons and gloves and wiping down the mat in between every nappy change. However, the location of the changing areas within the activity rooms means that the smell can build up and children's privacy is not guaranteed. Children are learning appropriate personal hygiene routines, such as washing their hand before eating and after using the toilet. Sufficient policies and procedures are in place to promote children's medical health. This includes a policy for the exclusion of unwell or contagious children, for the administration of medication and for dealing with accidents. All required information is recorded to promote children's health, however, information relating to children's medication is displayed and therefore does not fully promote confidentiality.

Sufficient information is in place to meet children's dietary needs, including restrictions and allergies. Babies have a care plan that give detailed information of each child's needs and how this should be given. This ensures all children are fed according to parental wishes. Children enjoy the snacks and meals provided, such as fruit and biscuits with juice and sausage casserole, mixed vegetables and apple crumble for lunch. However, menus do not routinely provide a range of cultural dishes to excite the children's tastes and menus are not displayed to ensure parents are aware of what is planned for their children.

Children have daily opportunities to have fresh air and exercise. Appropriate use is made of the outdoor space and children bring in wellies so that this area can be used in all weathers. However, the planning for this area of development is poor as learning intentions are rarely devised and so the obvious benefits to children are not apparent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a relatively well maintained, lit and ventilated environment. Although on occasions the activity rooms smell because nappies are changed in the corner of the toddler and baby rooms. Parents and children are made to feel welcome because staff greet them as they enter and information displays for parents and pictorial displays children help to create a welcoming atmosphere. Children have access to suitable equipment and furniture, however, the lack of storage for larger equipment and furniture, such as, high chairs, prams and clothes-airer means that clear play space is somewhat restricted and this creates a cluttered feel. Appropriate measures are in place to promote children's safety, such as, having a buzzer system to monitor access to the nursery, heating levels limited to reduce the possibility of a child injuring themselves and low level electrical sockets covered. However, the procedure for recording the attendance of visitors is not consistently implemented and this may result in a discrepancy in the future. A risk assessment has been completed by the Estate Manager for the college prior to children using the temporary building. Although a visual check of the premises is completed daily and accident records are referred to and used to identify any pattern in accidents in specific areas of the nursery, a written risk assessment has not been completed

since moving in and this means potential hazards may not have been identified. A suitable evacuation procedure is in place and this is displayed in the nursery. Regular fire drills take place to ensure its effectiveness, however, not enough regard is given to the evacuation of babies and how this will be managed, considering the location of the baby room, numbers of babies and staffing arrangements. This means that in the event of an emergency the system for evacuating babies could compromise the safety of the babies and staff working with them.

Staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their responsibility to protect children, although most have not had recent training in this area. The deputy is the named person responsible for child protection issues and there is a safeguarding children policy in place which has been recently reviewed and changed. Although this gives details of agencies to contact in the event of a concern, it is not fully reflective of current guidance, furthermore, it does contain the procedure to follow in the event that an allegation is made about a member of staff. This could result in a delay in making a referral if needed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children arrive at the beginning of the session and separate from their parents easily. Those who find this time a little difficult are reassured by staff and settle quickly. Children take part in a variety of activities and opportunities, to offer appropriate stimulation, such as, creative activities, role play opportunities and floor play. This is supported by a sufficient range of toys and resources to offer challenge and fun. Staff have team meetings to plan activities for the children and they also carry out observations of children's development, based on the Birth to three framework. However, it is not apparent how the observations carried out are used to influence the planning of activities and opportunities and therefore, the link between observations and the Birth to three framework is limited. A big focus is on creative activities, especially within the toddler room and the children clearly enjoy this aspect of play, however, the activity plans read as a list and the learning intentions for the children are unclear and therefore the benefits and outcomes are not always apparent. Furthermore, activity plans are not routinely shared with parents.

Overall, children are appropriately supported in the setting as staff implement a key worker system to support children's emotional well-being. Key workers are responsible for settling in new children and developing a caring relationship outside the family home. As a result, children build positive relationships and separation from parents is positive. Key workers are also responsible for liaising with parents to share information about children's well-being and developmental progress. This is done verbally and parents do not get a written progress report which means the sharing of information is dependant on the confidence and knowledge of the individual key worker and can result on some parents not been as updated as others.

Babies and toddlers have care plans in place, which is devised with parents and staff to ensure the care offered to the babies is consistent and meets the individual needs of the younger children. Babies are encouraged to develop their early social and communication skills, as staff sit on the floor with them, encouraging participation. They enjoy playing with musical toys, response toys and home made shakers.

Staff indicate the children in the out of school provision take part in a suitable range of activities, such as, art and craft activities and board games. Displays of children's art work show they have been focussing on Christmas creativity. The opportunities for the scheme are mostly free choice with staff available to support and encourage participation. However, the range of resources

to support this age group are some what limited, a range of board games and creative materials are available. Staff report these are in the process of being reviewed and extended.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage guidance and use this as a guide when planning activities. Although the observations completed on the children demonstrate how they are progressing and these are linked to photographs of children taking part in a variety of activities, the planning has little connection to the Foundation Stage, with the exception of the area highlighted on each activity. The learning intentions for the children are unclear. Furthermore, differentiation for the more able/less able or older/younger children is not apparent. Staff portray a positive role model for the children and this has a good impact on the behaviour and as a result children behave well. Children who have additional needs are appropriately supported and are enabled to join in the group activities, this is achieved by developing individual education plans as necessary.

Children are developing friendly relationships with each other and with staff. They listen to each other talking about things that are important to them, such as, sharing their experiences of meeting Santa at the weekend, this generates a bigger group discussion which the children thoroughly enjoy. They gain a sense of what is happening within the community as they collect toy parcels for unwell children and food parcels for the homeless, this contributes to them understanding that people live different lives and helps them empathise with different situations. They behave well and are responsive to staffs' reminders to say 'please' and thank you'. Children's self help and independence skills are developing appropriately, for example, they use the toilet independently and most wash their hands automatically and they attempt to put their coats and wellies on for play time. However, this is not encouraged enough, for example, they do not routinely help serve snacks or lunch and they do not pour their drinks at lunch time, this is mostly done by staff. Most children recognise their names from their coat pegs and at lunch time, however, generally opportunities to practise this are too few. For example, they do not routinely choose their names as they come on from name cards at the beginning of the session. They are developing their skills in writing their names and older children copy their names and younger ones go around the dots. Children's understanding of mathematics is developing sufficiently. Many children can count to 10 and beyond and older children confidently follow simple sequence patterns, for example, following the size and colours of bears in a game.

Children gain a sense of responsibility and value as they take home the nursery bear, they care for the bear and share their stories of what the bear has been doing with their peers when they return to the nursery. They explore the great outdoors by going on nature walks to collect leaves, twigs and conkers for the nature table. This contributes to them understanding about other living things. They gain a sense of time, while talking about the day, month and weather during circle time. Children show an appropriate sense of self and others. They move around the nursery confidently, making free choices about their play, negotiating others and furniture. They have daily opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, for example, through cutting, writing and using tools for play dough. Children enjoy using the outdoor play area, they run, jump and ride bikes with increasing confidence. However, this area is not well planned for and as a result it can become a little congested and learning intentions are unclear. Children express themselves well through creative activities provided, such as, role play experiences, free painting and planned art activities. They experiment with colour and many are able to recognise basic colours, such as, red, blue, green and red. They express their creative ideas through a range of media, such as, singing self selected songs and creating models from boxes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The nursery has a written equal opportunities policy which staff are aware of. Staff get to know the children and their families and get sufficient information from parents to meet the children's individual care needs. Younger children have care plans to achieve this. Children look at themselves and others and gain an appreciation of similarities and differences through the activities and opportunities provided, such as, celebrating different cultural festivals. Furthermore, having access to a sufficient range of resources to reflect a positive image of people in the community and photographs of themselves displayed in the nursery contributes to all children feeling valued. Adequate systems are in place to meet the needs of children with disabilities and/or a learning difficulty. There is a named special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) in place, who is in the process of completing training for the role and who is confident in working with parents and other agencies to access the necessary support for all children. Children generally behave well, they know the rules and boundaries in place and are responsive to staff requests. Staff provide a positive role model for children and use age appropriate strategies to deal with unwanted behaviour, such as, distraction and explaining the consequences of the behaviour and the impact on themselves and others. There is no named person designated for behaviour management and this means that should an issue occur that needs additional support the expertise may not be available to access to fully support the children. Children's spiritual, moral and social development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff have friendly, informal relationships with parents. Sufficient information to promote children's well-being and required consents to promote safety are in place. Parents are kept informed of the happening within the nursery through verbal communication, the key worker system and regular newsletters. Updates and information relating to children's progress is passed on through daily discussions with parents, however, this is not consistent and as a result some parents do not receive this information. They receive an information pack when their child is admitted to the provision and this contains some information relating to the outcomes for children, however, parents receive very limited information relating to the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum and as result have little understanding of the curriculum being followed within the nursery. Furthermore, parents are not routinely involved in developing the next steps for learning to help their child progress and this means they are not actively involved in their child's learning. Parents are informed of the policies and procedures that underpin practices and as result know how their child is cared for within the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Qualification requirements are well met with most of the staff team holding an appropriate childcare qualification or working towards one. Most staff have a first aid qualification and opportunities for further training are in place. Staff are kept up-to-date with current issues and practice as regular staff meetings are held to share such information. Children are cared for by suitable adults as satisfactory procedures are in place to ensure staff suitability. All staff have had the required checks carried out and children are never left alone with un-vetted adults. Furthermore, effective recruitment and ongoing suitability procedures are in place. Children have sufficient space for play with access to appropriate facilities, although areas are a little cluttered with furniture and equipment due to lack of storage. Required adult: child ratios are maintained and this is guaranteed through the accurate recording of children's attendance and

a current certificate of registration which is displayed. Effective contingency arrangements are in place to ensure children's welfare is sufficiently promoted.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff work together to provide a suitable range of activities and opportunities to stimulate the children. Regular staff meetings are used to plan the curriculum for the children and the nursery works with an advisory teacher to review and improve practices, however, effective strategies are not explored to evaluate the effectiveness of nursery education and how well children are achieving and this means monitoring systems are not fully effective.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Several recommendations for good practice were agreed at the last care inspection. The provider agreed to ensure all documents are a permanent record, to ensure all children's records are kept up-to-date and to ensure individual information is kept confidential. All records are recorded in ink and up-to date and most are stored confidentially, however, on occasions, information relating to the administration of medication is not kept completely confidential. The provider agreed to ensure soiled nappies are not stored in areas used by children and to plan for the safe evacuation of babies in emergencies. Soiled nappies are stored in an area away from the children which means they cannot access them. The procedure for evacuating the babies in the event of an emergency remains a weakness and the current procedure does not ensure the babies can be evacuated as quickly as possible to fully promote their safety.

Three recommendations were agreed at the last nursery education inspection. The provider agreed to plan for outdoor play so that children experience a variety of learning and access a range of equipment. The children have daily use of the outdoor area and access a variety of equipment, however, the planning and learning intentions for this aspect are not well thought out and consequently the benefits to children are not always evident. The provider agreed to organise and plan play and learning activities to offer sufficient challenge to all children. Children enjoy the range of activities provided, however, these do reflect differentiation for the more able/less able or younger/older children, therefore, adaptation to meet the individual needs of the children is not apparent. The provider agreed to systematically observe and record children's progress to provide a reliable basis to assess progress and plan for the next steps for learning. Observations are completed for all children and these are based around the stepping stones, however, it is not evident that the observations are used to influence planning. Furthermore, the next steps for learning are not devised, so it is unclear what information is used to help children progress on to the next stage of 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.

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):

- review the safeguarding children policy to ensure it is fully reflective of current guidance and includes the procedure to follow in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff
- conduct a risk assessment of the premises, review this if there is a significant change and develop an action plan with timescales for action required to minimise identified risks
- further develop the procedure for the safe evacuation of babies in emergencies
- review and improve the system for planning activities and ensure the observations carried are used effectively to influence the activities and opportunities provided (also applies to nursery education)
- review and improve the system for informing parents of children's developmental progress and ensure parents are actively involved in developing the next steps for learning to help children progress (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- ensure learning intentions are consistently applied and clearly relate to the activity taking place (also applies to care)
- implement an effective system to enable parents to be fully aware of the activities and opportunities being planned for the children and ensure the activity plans are displayed in a way so that they can be seen by parents (also applies to care)
- further develop the systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the nursery education provision

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