

Bridgwater College Children's Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142750
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Inspector	Rachael Williams
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Registered person	The Governing Body of Bridgwater College
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?

Bridgwater Early Years Centre was established in 1993 and was designated as an Early Excellence Centre in 1997. Since 2006 it has been a partnership Children's Centre between Bridgwater College and Somerset Local Education Authority, and is located on the college campus in Bridgwater, Somerset. The centre has purpose built accommodation with a secure outdoor area. The accommodation comprises of a large main playroom with two adjoining baby rooms, a sensory room, an audio room, a music room, a Forest School base room, a community room, meeting rooms for parents, kitchen and toilet facilities. The centre provides care for children living in the local and wider community. The Children's Centre also incorporates Sydenham Family Centre and the Squirrel's nursery at Cannington who deliver the core offer to the Sydenham ward.

There are currently 94 children on roll aged from four months to five years. This includes 39 children who are in receipt of early years government funding. The centre supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The centre is open for 50 weeks of the year from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 17:30.

The centre manager is supported by a suitably qualified childcare manager and a qualified teacher. There are 18 practitioners who work directly with the children; of these 15 have Level 3 early years qualifications. They are supported by visiting specialist staff, such as speech therapists and educational psychologists, and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy hearty, nutritious meals and benefit from the setting's commitment to providing healthy, fresh food. For example, children thoroughly enjoy the independence of the café system where they can choose from a selection of fresh and dried fruit. Staff preparing the snacks are diligent at checking children's special dietary needs to ensure children's well-being. They look forward to a varied menu which includes all the important food groups. They are reminded to take frequent drinks throughout the day and are able to access the water cooler independently. This ensures they remain well hydrated. Babies are held comfortably whilst being bottle fed and all feeds are stored appropriately and prepared under hygienic conditions.

Children are well cared for in an emergency as some staff are qualified in first aid and there are clear, efficient systems in place to respond appropriately in the event of an accident. For example, accidents are comprehensively recorded and promptly shared with parents. Appropriate consents are obtained and administered medication is effectively recorded and verbally shared with parents.

Children learn about good hygiene as they carefully and conscientiously wash their hands before snack times and after using the lavatory. Younger children independently access potties and follow staff's good role model of emptying the potty and cleaning it after use. Staff monitor this effectively and ensure the potties are sterilised. There are very good systems in place to ensure hygienic nappy changing and that young children's individual routines are adhered to. Hence, children's emotional needs are well met. On the whole, good hygiene prevails across the whole Children's Centre, however, as shoes are permitted in the baby annexes they are not able to play and crawl on clean, fresh surfaces. Parents receive good support and advice to develop their child's health through very good links established with health professionals attached to the family centre.

The free flow environment ensures that all children have excellent opportunities to play in the fresh air every day. The outdoor environment is spacious and well equipped to effectively support children's developing coordination, balance and muscle development. For example, children choosing the ride-on toys negotiate pathways well, turning competently and reducing their speed to stop and avoid collisions with younger children as they enjoy chasing games. Good use is made of the local environment to enhance children's physical skills, such as regular walks to the local shops, Bridgwater College and the train station. The Forest School is an excellent resource which encourages the children to be fully involved in nature within their local surroundings.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a colourful and inviting, open plan environment which fully supports their independence. The spacious environment is organised exceptionally well to meet children's

developing needs. Separate annexes ensure babies are comfortable and well cared for. The flexible transition for babies and young children ensures they are able to explore the larger environment confidently when they are ready. The environment is conducive to learning and reflects the community exceptionally well. Children make decisions about their play and can access an abundant range of high-quality toys and resources which stimulate and challenge their play effectively. The Children's Centre abides by their no smoking policy and provides excellent support for parents wishing to cease smoking. However, the college's designated smoking area is very near to the entrance of the Children's Centre and this does not have a positive impact on children as it does not encourage awareness of healthy lifestyles.

Security is paramount. Very good systems are in place to ensure children's safety, for instance visitors' and students' attendance is well documented and entry to the children's domain is fully monitored by administration staff. There are effective arrangements to ensure children do not leave the setting unsupervised, such as high handled doors, and that they are collected by a suitable adult. The setting maintains an accurate record of the times of attendance of children. However, staff do not record their attendance and this means there is not always an accurate record of who is on the premises, for example, in the event of emergency. Robust risk assessments ensure children's continued safety. Staff are vigilant and daily checks ensure the children's play areas are safe and secure. Children are developing a good awareness of their own safety as staff are diligent at giving clear explanations. For example, a practitioner clearly explains to a child why it is not safe to stand on the settee.

Children's well-being is safeguarded as key staff have very good knowledge of child protection issues. Staff benefit from clear and up-to-date guidance to support them in this area which is readily available, such as a comprehensive child protection policy which ensures prompt action is taken to fully support children's well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children explore and investigate independently. They make decisions about their play and are well supported in their choices by interested staff. The vast range of resources help children to rehearse, repeat, review and consolidate their learning. Children are offered a stimulating range and balance of experiences which comprehensively support the Birth to three matters framework, of which the staff have very good knowledge. Staff monitor children's progression well through annotated photographs, tracking sheets and observations. However, planned activities, such as key family activities, are not fully evaluated to influence future experiences.

Children become competent learners and make connections in their play. For example, a younger child enjoys exploring a range of boxes, opening and closing them. He rehearses this movement and then consolidates by repeating the activity with other containers showing glee at his achievements. Young children enjoy exploring textures using their senses. For instance, a child thoroughly enjoys handling the dough by squeezing and rolling it. She enjoys transporting it to the fire engine where she can crawl and use it for a variety of purposes. The children thrive in the sensory room where they can respond through movement to the music and follow the flashing, optic lights. They play hide and seek in the wicker ball pit and follow the wall projector images.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their development as practitioners have good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children's capabilities. However, there is no formal system to identify children's abilities on entry to the setting. Practitioners maintain good records of carefully documented observations of children's achievements to plan for future learning, however, assessment records do not sufficiently reflect children's progress towards the early learning goals. Practitioners are transferring to new documentation which has recently been implemented. There is a good balance of small group, planned experiences and child initiated activities which positively support the different ways in which children learn. A focused activity, led by the qualified teacher, encourages children to listen to an audiotape and to match the sounds with pictures, as identified in their individual learning plans. Children learn from each other, for instance an older child shows a younger one how to sweep the sand up developing good hand and eye coordination. Staff have excellent knowledge of children's interests, for instance a practitioner ensures that a child who thoroughly enjoys being involved in home experiences supports her to fold the freshly laundered blankets which encourages his coordination and gross motor skills.

The well-organised setting and effective deployment of staff develops children's good independent skills. They make decisions about their play accessing activities that interest them and are fully motivated to learn. Children are developing good friendships. They play cooperatively and most take turns and share. For instance, three children play cooperatively whilst they build a range of structures with large building blocks. Children thoroughly enjoy new experiences, such as Forest School, where they develop new skills and keenly share their experiences.

Children are confident communicators. For example, a three-year-old describes the clay as 'hard'. A practitioner challenges the child's problem-solving skills and suggests adding water to soften it. The child explores this idea and suggests putting it in both his hands to warm it up. The children use a range of tools purposefully and add resources, such as matchsticks, competently to enhance their models. Two children thoroughly enjoy exploring the shells using magnifying glasses. They share their findings with each other noticing different shapes, colours and patterns. In key family time a group of children explore the recent carnival within their community reflecting on their favourite floats. They represent their interests pictorially observing the different shapes and colours. Children confidently select books of interest and listen attentively to the story responding well to the questions asked. Children are challenged effectively. After reading a familiar story in Spanish, where children become aware that print carries meaning, they are further challenged as a practitioner shows them where Spain is on the globe. The children become actively involved and explore the globe asking questions about different countries.

Children's creativity is fully supported in Forest School activities. They develop new skills, for instance in carpentry they select tools for a purpose and choose techniques to shape, assemble and join materials. Children thoroughly enjoy exploring the sounds of an excellent array of musical instruments. They develop new ways of playing the instruments and to obtain different sounds. They are encouraged to play the instruments fast and slow, quietly and loudly following these simple instructions competently.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive in a welcoming environment where excellent, caring relationships have been established. All children are included and their differences acknowledged and valued. Children have a good sense of belonging and are developing very good self-esteem as they feel secure in their key families. Children are settled and confident due to flexible settling in procedures which value children as individuals and ensure excellent knowledge of families in order to support them effectively. An abundant range of resources, relevant topics and positive images develop children's good awareness of the diversity in our society. Children show pride in their accomplishments, for instance when sharing their 'celebration of achievement' portfolio. Children learn about the wider world in meaningful ways as they develop their awareness of the local community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children who have additional needs receive highly effective support. The Children's Centre is experienced in working very closely with local supporting agencies and implement excellent systems to ensure that each child receives the care and guidance they require. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has excellent knowledge of her role of identifying and assessing children's individual needs. There is excellent liaison between herself, the area SENCO, teacher, key workers and parents to ensure these individual needs are met effectively.

Most children's behaviour is exemplary. They play cooperatively and adapt their behaviour very well to work in small groups or to attend Forest School. The informative behaviour management policy is shared with parents and ensures consistent and sensitive approaches. Unacceptable behaviour is managed exceptionally well by supportive staff.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents are provided with a wealth of helpful information regarding the Children's Centre and there is exceptionally good support for families within the area. Parents are fully involved in children's learning. They contribute to topics and children's achievements from home are readily included in the 'celebration of achievement' progression record. There is a daily exchange of information and annually, parents are invited to share the children's achievements on a dedicated day of celebration. Good relationships are established with their families through flexible settling in procedures and home visits.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a very well-organised setting which is exceptionally well resourced and staffed by enthusiastic, caring and highly competent practitioners. There are clear recruitment and induction arrangements to ensure children are cared for by suitable persons. Staff are actively involved and effective teamwork ensures a stable environment is provided for the children. The comprehensive operational plan ensures the smooth running of the Children's Centre. Practitioners are adept at working with outside agencies to provide very good core services to the community.

Staff are deployed effectively to support children's interests. Children demonstrate warm and affectionate relationships with staff and are happy and engaged throughout their time in the setting as there is a good balance of experiences which encourage children's learning, independence and safety. Children are closely supervised and ratios are maintained. There is a thorough registration system which ensures children's, visitors' and students' attendance is accurately recorded. However, this system does not include staff, hence an accurate record of

staff's attendance has not been consistently completed. Robust systems are in place to ensure that students are well supported and comprehensive feedback is given to them to ensure continuity in care for their children.

All regulatory documentation is in place and enhances the good practices of the Children's Centre. Confidentiality is maintained and all documentation is stored securely within the centre. There are effective arrangements in place for sharing records and children's achievements with parents to keep them well informed of their child's development.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and management of the nursery education provision is good. An effective system of reflecting on practice means that children's learning is well supported. The management team are proactive in identifying areas for improvement, such as planning and assessment. There is a clear management structure which ensures effective decision making. Practitioners feel empowered and highly motivated as they are fully involved in the Children's Centre's development through regular team and staff meetings. The new management team have high aspirations and all staff have clear direction. All practitioners are focused on helping children make good progress and have common sense of purpose.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were raised relating to safety, health and nursery education. Most have been satisfactorily addressed.

A comprehensive risk assessment has been established which ensures children's safety and well-being.

Permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment has been obtained to ensure children benefit from consistency in care.

Children are effectively challenged by competent practitioners who have excellent knowledge of children's individual needs.

A system is being developed to ensure children's progression is effectively monitored.

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 good.

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):

- monitor practices within the under two area to maintain a clean crawling environment for non mobile babies
- extend registration systems to include accurate times of staff attendance.

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):

- continue to develop systems to clearly evaluate activities and to identify children's progression towards the early learning goals
- adopt a system to effectively record children's attainment at entry

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