

Bunyan Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219101
Inspection date	29 June 2007
Inspector	Susan Marriott

Setting Address	Kempston West Methodist Playgroup, High Street, KEMPSTON, Bedfordshire, MK42 7AQ
Telephone number	01234 300532
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Registered person	Bunyan Playgroup
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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bunyan Playgroup opened in 1996 and operates from the church rooms of the Kempston West Methodist Church, Kempston. The group is managed by a committee of parents. Children's activities take place in the main hall and smaller meeting room. There are separate toilet facilities, kitchen and an entrance room. There is an outdoor play area. The group does not have sole use of the premises.

The playgroup is registered to take a maximum of 24 children aged between two and five years. There are 37 children on roll and of these, 22 receive funding for nursery education. The group operates five days a week, from 09.30 to 12.00, term time only. There is a lunch club available every weekday from 12.00 to 13.15. The group is able to support children with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are five members of staff, including the manager, who work with the children and of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualification. The playgroup has good links with the Bedford Lower School and Balliol School. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection and the premises are maintained in a properly clean state. Tables are regularly sprayed with anti-bacterial spray and the toilets are kept clean and hygienic. A sun care policy is in place to protect children's welfare. Children learn about germs and healthy living through the daily routines. Staff remember to promote discussion about the reasons for hand washing and readily modify their practice in terms of the best possible outcomes for children. For example, children are now encouraged to wash their hands under running water in place of communal bowls of water. Tissues are readily available for keeping noses clean.

Children receive appropriate treatment in medical emergency because all staff hold current and suitable first aid qualifications and the first aid box is accessible and suitably stocked. Regular checks of the first aid box ensure that supplies do not run out and that sterile dressings past their expiry date are discarded and replaced. Staff conscientiously record all accidents and include the relevant details to protect children's welfare.

All the children enjoy daily indoor and outdoor activities which enables them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills through a generally appropriate level of challenge. Children get outside in the fresh air on most days and relish their time in the outdoor play area. A broad range of outdoor play equipment provides opportunities for children to climb and balance. Children use bikes, tricycles, rockers and cars. Young children demonstrate a noticeable ability to cope with the varying surfaces and narrow pathways as they manoeuvre their toys around the garden area. Older children enjoy an increased range of challenge in the garden. For example, staff set appropriate tasks and support children on an individual basis, throwing and catching balls and aiming into a basketball net.

Children benefit from healthy snacks and their dietary needs are met because staff work well with parents. The snack rota is displayed for parents information and includes plenty of fruit. Snack time is being used to good effect as a learning time for children, promoting social skills and the development of independence. For example, children serve themselves and pour their own drinks. Children do not become thirsty whilst playing because they can help themselves to a drink from an easily accessible jug of water and cups.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept very safe in the pre-school because staff give excellent priority to security issues. Children's safe arrival and departure is particularly well-monitored and children are very well-supervised at all times. Staff record fire evacuation procedures and carry out drills with suitable frequency to ensure the safety of the children. Staff monitor visitors to the setting by keeping a visitors book. Relevant risk assessments are completed on a daily basis and the garden is thoroughly checked before use. Children learn to keep themselves safe in the setting because staff give good explanations as to why, for example, it is necessary to wait with staff until parents come to collect them.

Children are warmly welcomed and well-cared for in a pleasant, suitably safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. The staff have put up photographs, posters and pictures to make the rooms attractive for children and there are some displays of children's work which enhance the environment. Staff continue to develop ways to ensure that children can access resources in the playrooms easily and independently.

Children's welfare is properly safeguarded because they are protected by vigilant and caring, informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Some staff have received suitable training in this field and relevant and current reference information is readily accessible. The written policy in relation to safeguarding children has been appropriately updated.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their play and learning because most staff are confident, enthusiastic and highly-skilled in their childcare practice. Children are happy and settle quickly in the gentle and nurturing environment. Staff provide a broad range of worthwhile activities, both indoor and outdoor, which engage children throughout the pre-school in the learning process. Nonetheless, activities and play opportunities occasionally lack sufficient detailed planning and mean that staff do not utilise every possible opportunity to develop children's learning, language and mathematical thinking. For example, children working on an 'Under the Sea' frieze, have mainly blue collage materials and blue paint available. Staff talk about what animals children might expect to find under the sea, but little preparation work means that children draw their responses from restricted experience. Children have clear routines to their sessions and follow set procedures for certain activities which help them feel secure. Planning and assessment documentation refers to the 'Birth to three matters' framework and shows how the setting takes general heed of the guidance when working with children under the age of three years. Staff provide positive role models for children and give sensitive support to all children. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff, who encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition as they support play. Staff get to know the children very well and skilfully adapt their level of language and questioning to reflect each child's stage of development.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All staff have a competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are making good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. They generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through planned activities. Older and more able children maintain their interest in the activities due to the skilful intervention of experienced staff who re-direct their learning appropriately. Staff work together as a very effective and committed team deploying themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect.

The staff are continually developing their planning. Medium term plans are superbly detailed and provide lots of information about the educational programme, demonstrating the coverage of the six areas of learning under an identified theme. Some staff are intuitively able to interpret the basic plan and adjust activities appropriately to the developmental stage of each child as they work. However, staff do not always understand the language and terminology used on

the planning format for the daily focus activity and are not referring to the curriculum guidance folder on a regular basis. This means that staff do not refer to the full range of stepping stones as they work. Therefore, the setting is not using the stepping stones in an appropriate way to secure and progress the learning of some children in a sufficiently consistent manner.

Conscientiously kept assessment folders are based upon dated observations, arranged under the six areas of learning and parents and carers are able to make their own contributions. Photographs and examples of work are dated and provide evidence for assessment. Staff complete a tracking document for each child, which shows that child's progress through the stepping stones. Staff do not always evaluate activities effectively and use this information to monitor the quality of the provision. It is not clear that assessment is fully effective in securing children's progression in learning and informing the next steps in the learning programme. The potential impact of weaknesses in the planning and assessment systems on the children is currently minimised by the efficient, practical teaching skills exhibited by the staff team.

Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Essential reassurance is provided by staff to children who are exceptionally anxious about visitors to the group. Snack time is a positive and effective learning time for the children. They select their name card from the wall and hand it to staff overseeing the serving of food. They develop hand-eye coordination whilst walking through to the side room carrying their drink and snack. Children are actively encouraged to look at books in the side room and complete the weather chart routine. Children discuss the letter of the week and the sound it represents. Children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems. They count the number of girls and boys present and add the totals together, discussing about one more and one less. Children learn about basic information technology and a wide range of construction toys enables children to build and fix pieces together, improving manual dexterity. Children enjoy a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities to promote physical development. They explore paint and print, using their own ideas to create their own pictures and freely access musical instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop their understanding and appreciation of others through simple planned activities that promote a greater awareness of the wider world. Children participate in art and craft activities connected with celebrations and taste cultural foods. Staff dress up at Divali. The setting includes the local dragon boat festival in the topic plan. Children who have varying needs receive excellent support. Children's individual needs are discussed with parents in detail. Any special requirements or information are discussed and consistent communication and information exchange takes place. Children's learning difficulties and disabilities are recognised and met sensitively. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision.

Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. Children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff and any unwanted behaviour is corrected using positive language. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff work really hard to develop a positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. A detailed prospectus is given to all parents and carers and they follow an induction programme which ensures that all parents receive the same information. There is a good relationship between parents and staff and there is a two-way flow of information. Parents may serve on the committee, which is elected at the annual general meeting each year, and can become involved in fund raising. Extensive information is available for parents on a daily basis, because the hallway is used extremely well to display a wealth of information. Staff encourage parents to share information about their children and they are able to see their child's records and regularly contribute to them if they wish. When working well, this arrangement of two-way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. This underpins their progress in the pre-school and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The established and experienced staff team are well-supported by the supervisor and the parent committee who oversee the management of the pre-school and this safeguards and promotes children's care and welfare. The supervisor works alongside her staff team and therefore has a 'hands on approach' to every aspect of the pre-school operation. The mature and stable staff team are well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. They are actively involved in planning and decision-making and contribute to the continuous monitoring of the setting through self-evaluation and reflection in line with 'Every Child Matters'. Staff follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children. Staff demonstrate a genuine affinity with children; they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Documentation is mostly clear and generally accessible. Staff clearly and confidently speak about their procedures to follow in the event of a range of scenarios. Planning and assessment systems continue to evolve, and increasingly secure and progress children's learning. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

Three recommendations were raised at the last inspection of day care. The visitors book has been modified to record the time visitors arrive and leave the playgroup. Staff attendance is now recorded on the register and policies and procedures for fire safety, uncollected children, lost child and complaints have been appropriately amended. The actions taken by the setting have satisfactorily addressed the issues raised and improved the quality and standards of care for children.

At the last inspection of nursery education, two key issues were identified. These concerned the planning and organisation of the whole session and the use of assessments to identify what children need to learn next. The setting has implemented a programme of monitoring through self-evaluation to improve the nursery education and has established an outdoor area to support progression of skills in physical development. The actions taken have effectively improved the quality and standards of nursery education across all six areas of learning. The group have tried different methods of assessment and this is still work in progress. This issue continues as a recommendation following this inspection because planning does not inform the next steps in children's 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):

- develop activities, play opportunities and first hand experiences which allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners and to develop their language and mathematical thinking.

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 the planning, correlating with the stepping stones to secure and progress children's learning across the ability range. Identify what the children are intended to learn from each activity, providing variety and choice
- continue to develop the observations and assessments of children's learning, ensuring that observations correlate with the stepping stones and that records enable children's progress to be tracked against the stepping stones. Use the information gained to inform the next steps in children's learning.

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