

Birchanger Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	402982
Inspection date	10 March 2008
Inspector	Carol Brown
Setting Address	Birchanger C of E Primary School, Birchwood, Birchanger, Hertfordshire, CM23 5QF
Telephone number	0777 3730754
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Registered person	Birchanger Nursery Unit
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?

Birchanger Nursery originally opened in 1990 but changed ownership in 2001. It operates from one room in a demountable building in the grounds of the Birchanger Primary School. The group serves the local and wider area.

There are currently 37 children from 2 years 6 months to 5 years on roll. This includes 15 funded 3-year-olds and eight funded 4-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Currently there are no children attending who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term time. Sessions are from 09:15 to 12:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 09:15 to 11:45 and from 12:30 to 15:00 on Tuesday and Thursday.

Six full and part-time staff work with the children. All members of staff have childcare qualifications. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is currently working towards accreditation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and hygienic environment, where they are encouraged to develop an understanding of good hygiene practices. Effective daily routines promote children's health and well-being, for example, hand cleaning and toilet routines help to prevent the spread of infection. Children enjoy a varied range of activities, which contribute to their good health, this is as a result of regular access to outdoor play, where they are gaining increasing confidence riding bikes, balancing and climbing. This is further supported as the children can access climbing and balance equipment indoors and have opportunities to engage in music and movement activities.

Children are well protected as all of the staff hold current first aid certificates and have a sound knowledge of first aid techniques, this means that they are able to provide appropriate care and attention in the event of an accident. Parents are required to give written consent for emergency medical treatment, which means that children receive the optimum treatment according to their specific needs. Accident records are appropriately maintained. First aid supplies are easily accessible and well stocked. Children who are infectious are excluded from the setting to reduce the risk of cross-infection. There are effective procedures in place to record medication, which includes written parental consent.

The children are beginning to understand the importance of healthy eating through the provision of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks, which include fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables. At the time of the inspection none of the staff held current food hygiene certificates, however, two staff are booked to attend training in early April 2008. The risk to children is minimal as snack foods provided are fruit, vegetables, crackers and biscuits. Snack time is a positive social experience as the children sit together, pass the snack plate around the table and encourage one another to say please and thank you. The staff have devised name cards that include pictures of snack foods, which the children place on the wall, this helps the children to recognise the words. Children talk excitedly about the snack café, where they can help themselves to a drink and a snack. One child said 'It's just like a real café, we have a table cloth and flowers'. This helps the children to think about their own needs and develops independence skills. Parents are required to provide information about their child's dietary requirements to enable the staff to meet individual needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are cared for in a very safe and secure environment. They are able to move around safely and independently, as a result of thorough risk assessments and the excellent supervision of the staff. Security within the setting is very good. There are systems in place to prevent unauthorised access to the pre-school. Visitors are required to sign the visitors book and state the nature of their visit. The children are able to talk about safety issues, for example, how emergency evacuation procedures are conducted. Children and staff regularly practise emergency evacuation procedures. This helps children to become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. Fire exits are clearly labelled and free from obstruction.

Resources and play equipment are safe, well organised, meet safety standards and afford children easy access. The children are encouraged to tidy toys away before snack time and

going outside to play. There are very effective procedures in place for the safe arrival and collection of children and they are only released into the care of a known adult. Children are supervised closely when playing outside and the staff are well deployed to ensure children's safety is paramount. Children are able to play safely, this is because the staff are proactive in ensuring that the nursery is well organised and risks are minimised.

Children are well protected. This is because the staff have a very good understanding of the physical and emotional signs, which could indicate child protection issues and the appropriate procedures to follow to record and report any concerns. The setting has a comprehensive child protection policy, which is displayed for parents.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and confident in the nurseries welcoming environment and they greet each other and the staff on arrival. Children who are new to the setting are supported by the staff and parents are encouraged to stay with their child to help them to settle. Activities and play materials offer children the opportunity to make their own choices about play and learning. Children have access to a varied and stimulating range of age- appropriate activities and resources. This enables them to develop and practice their skills, explore, investigate and problem solve. These are well presented and provide opportunities for the children to develop gross and fine motor skills. Children's creative efforts are displayed throughout the setting, however, most of these are adult-directed and do not fully support children's sense of achievement.

The staff have developed comprehensive systems to record children's progress, which involves parents. These are further supported through efficient processes to monitor and evaluate children's learning. The staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well and incorporate all elements when planning activities for younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good, this is because the staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs of young children and the appropriate ways in which to meet individual needs in line with the stepping stones of the early learning goals. Effective monitoring systems ensure that children's individual needs and interests are well met. The staff are skilled at planning and evaluating children's learning needs.

Children are eager to come into the nursery and are keen to learn and they are confident with the routines. They are beginning to form strong relationships with their peers and firm friendships are being formed as children actively seek out one another. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems ensure that children are learning at their own pace and are achieving their potential. Children's learning is supported through a wide range of age-appropriate activities, which offer challenge and develop their interests. Children's thinking and problem solving skills are supported by the careful use of open-ended questioning by the staff.

Children are making continual progress and are provided with sufficient challenge. The staff carefully plan the day to ensure that a balance of new and familiar activities and resources are provided. This gives the children opportunities to try new experiences whilst having the security of familiar activities to enable them to consolidate their learning.

Children are beginning to understand the rules of conversation and wait their turn before responding to questions. Children are confident speakers and listen attentively to stories and rhymes. The staff use good questioning techniques to extend children's use of language and reinforce their learning, for example, they use open-ended questions to encourage children to discuss the sequence of events in the story of 'Where's piggly'. Words are used as labels throughout the setting and the children are beginning to recognise letters and the sounds they make. This is supported as the staff introduce two new letters each week and the children are encouraged to bring in things from home that start with these letters. Many of the older children and some of the younger ones can write their own names and there are ample opportunities provided to enable children to practise their skills, such as writing their own names of their paintings. Children are obviously interested in books and stories, for example, two children were seen in the reading area with a familiar book retelling the story and following text from left to right.

Most of the children reliably count to 10, some are able to count to 20. Activities and discussion provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of mathematical concepts, for example, weighing ingredients during a messy cooking activity, using language, such as 'I need more flour'. Numbers are used as labels and children are beginning to recognise these.

Children are learning about the world around them and are able to explore and investigate. Themed activities develop children's understanding of the wider community, such as 'people who help us' are invited into the nursery to talk to children about their roles in society. Children are learning about the beliefs and cultures of others through appropriate resources, planned activities and the celebration of festivals. Themed activities support children's knowledge in relation to the changes in seasons, for example, spring changes and planting seeds. The nursery has access to three computers, however two of these are broken and therefore this limits children's ability to access information and communication technology.

Children have access to a range of creative and sensory mediums including dough, sand, water, paint and glue. They are able to use these confidently and take care, for example, when weighing and pouring ingredients during a messy cooking activity. Children are able to use their imagination and initiative, for example, the home corner converted to a potting shed allows children to explore and investigate how things grow.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and respected as individuals. Children are from various backgrounds, which helps them to recognise difference and similarity within society. The staff show care and consideration and treat all children with dignity and respect. Children are encouraged to talk about home life, for example, one child talked to a member of staff about the train guide his daddy bought him from the garden centre.

Children are provided with a range of resources and activities, which help them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider community. For example, there are displays and books within the setting that depict flags and words from countries around the world. The setting supports the inclusion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, however, there are no children currently on roll with identified needs. The staff are proactive in supporting the placement of children with learning difficulties as they are learning sign language. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is good and they are beginning to show care and consideration for one another. This is as a result of the staff giving clear and concise explanations to children as to the effect their behaviour is having on others, whilst taking into account their age, level of understanding and maturity.

Partnership with parents & carers is good and they have access to the settings policies and procedures. The nursery is run by the Birchanger Trust and all parents and carers are members of the Trust. The staff actively seek parents' views about their child's interests and needs to enable them to provide appropriate care. Parents are given daily information regarding their child's progress.

Children's development and welfare have been further supported with the introduction of home/nursery books. This provides an additional means of communication between the nursery and parents/carers and allows for suggestions from both sides to support children's learning objectives. There are also opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress on a one to one basis with their child's key worker.

Several parents interviewed expressed their satisfaction at the care provided, the friendly and supportive staff and that any concerns are taken seriously and acted upon.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Birchanger Nursery Unit meets the needs of the children for whom it provides. Daily routines help children to feel secure and confident. However, these are flexible and allow for spontaneity. The staff work well as a team, are deployed effectively and understand their roles and responsibilities. There is a key worker system in place, which provides parents with a link person and ensures continuity of care for the children. There is a commitment to ongoing training and development, for example, training for staff in relation to the new Early Years Foundation Stage and safeguarding training. There are effective recruitment procedures in place. Documentation for the safe and effective management of the nursery is in place. This promotes children's welfare and contributes to the smooth running of the provision.

Leadership and Management is good, both the Manager and Deputy lead by good example and utilise the strengths of individual staff member well by delegating different areas of responsibility. Regular team meetings and individual supervision supports staff development as areas of weakness are identified and further training and support is made available.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection it was recommended that the organisation of snack time be reviewed to give children more opportunities to practise their independence skills and allow more time at their activities. This has been addressed through the introduction of the snack café, this allows children to access a snack and a drink when they need it. This means that children can take more responsibility for their own needs.

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):

- ensure that staff preparing snacks have undertaken the appropriate food handling training
- improve displays of children's creative work to include their own efforts and develop their sense of achievement.

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 children to access information and communication technology.

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