

Busy Bees Day Nursery at Altrincham

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310342
Inspection date	29 July 2008
Inspector	Rachel Ruth Britten
Setting Address	72 Ellesmere Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 1JD
Telephone number	0161 928 9203
E-mail	
Registered person	Busy Bees Children's Day Nurseries
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?

Busy Bees at Altrincham is one of a chain of day nurseries owned by the Busy Bees Group Limited. The nursery has been registered since September 2000 and operates from a large Victorian house in a residential part of Altrincham. A maximum of 107 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open on week days between 08.00 and 18.00 with the exception of bank holidays. All children share access to rear and front play areas.

There are currently 118 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 12 receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area as their parents travel to work in or around the area. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities although there are none attending at present. Children who speak English as an additional language are also supported.

The nursery employs 28 staff. Of these, 16 hold a suitable early years qualification. The setting receives support from the early years advisory service in Trafford.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactory because routines are in place to keep the nursery clean and equipped. Kitchen, laundry and home rooms are suitable and kept clean. Practitioners usually encourage hand washing procedures and sometimes prompt children to use the boxes of tissues, soap, paper towels and bins provided. Pre-school children also now take part in serving their own snacks and meals. However, pre-school children's levels of independence for competent hand washing and nose blowing are still low. Staff are thorough in their personal hygiene, protecting children from cross-infection by wearing disposable aprons for nappy changing and food preparation and washing their hands regularly.

Attention to individual children's health needs means that babies' daily routines and all children's dietary needs are well documented so that all staff are aware of individual children's needs and their parents' wishes. There is a clear sickness and medicine policy and first aid supplies are kept replenished and strategically placed around the building. A number of staff have first aid qualifications and consent is obtained for the seeking of any necessary emergency medical treatment. Medication administration and records are mostly correctly completed using a system managed in the nursery office to ensure that parents have given written consent and instructions. However, one administration of medication was not signed by or witnessed by staff on the day of inspection.

Children enjoy sufficient levels of physical activity and challenge both indoors and outdoors. Each room has one or two allocated times per day to use the rear fixed climbing and exploring adventure area and covered areas enable children to go outside in all weathers. They take part in climbing, balancing, construction, ball skills, role play, group games, arts and crafts, water play, investigation and riding activities in the outdoor play areas. Children are also very well nourished and enjoy a healthy diet through snacks and meals made on the premises. Snacks are based around fruits and vegetables and the rotating lunch menu is low in sugar and free of additives. Water or milk is offered to drink throughout the day but pre-school children's water bottles are not clearly labelled and are not replenished from the previous day until lunch time. Children sit in small groups with staff for meals and some good manners and independence are encouraged. However, children do not get involved in much clearing up and the social aspect of relevant conversation and discussion is underdeveloped because staff do not talk to children enough at meal times.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, bright and stimulating environment with a happy and purposeful atmosphere. Varied activity spaces are invitingly set out to maximise children's choices and provide cosy spaces to set up and use stimulating and high quality resources. The open plan lay-out and new flooring, decoration and furniture allow children freedom of movement and access to all resources. Role play equipment, construction and small world toys, books and every-day household and natural objects are used alongside computers to stimulate every child's senses. Shaded and covered areas outside are used for messy, experimental and story times as well as the large climbing and adventure equipment used for physical and role play. Sand, water, clay, play dough, paint, junk and collage materials are also regularly available for children to experiment with and use in a variety of ways.

Children are learning about how to keep themselves safe because staff support them to take considered risks and bring safety into their discussions with children. For example, staff teach them to walk indoors, to eat small bites of their food in case they choke and to watch what they are doing as they play with beads. There is good security to the public entrance door through use of a finger print recognition system and parents and carers are usually greeted by nursery staff before going to the rooms to collect their children. Careful arrangements using enrolment information are made to ensure that staff know exactly who is collecting a child and who is permitted to do so if this is not the usual parent or designated carer. During the day, registers are regularly checked and head counts taken to ensure that all children are accounted for.

Children's safety is supported well through documentation and staff's practice. Staff have designated roles and areas to keep clean, safe and ready for children to use. The health and safety officer liaises with the organisation's head office to specify necessary maintenance and new resources and the head office also evaluate accident records to see if there are any with specific rectifiable causes. However, some accident records do not show what treatment was given and some identified safety issues, such as a required hand rail to assist emergency evacuation and faulty taps, are not promptly put right. Periodic fire drills are held, electrical appliances, wiring and fire equipment are checked and documentation about what to do in the event of any emergency is posted.

Children are well protected from abuse because staff have a good understanding of their role in child protection and safeguarding procedures. Child protection information is clearly displayed. Staff work together with other agencies to support children who are at risk and have procedures in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. The named persons for child protection have been on safeguarding children training and keep contact numbers readily accessible and checked periodically for correctness.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's enjoyment and achievements are good. They settle to play, discover and experiment because the activities and routines of the day are planned to allow children of all ages to initiate and pursue their interests. They have fun dressing up, using small world figures and props, role playing with the pretend food or finding out the sounds that the beads, pans and wooden spoons make. There are extended periods of child-initiated play and some circle time and small group activity when children enjoy stories and pursue planned activities and games. Key worker groups are in place, although the daily routine is not organised to maximise the time which staff spend with their individual children in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Nevertheless, the environment and staff offer children challenge, choice and increasing independence, especially in the new outdoor adventure area and in the messy area of the pre-school.

The quality of staff interactions with children are best with babies and pre-school children. Staff across the nursery talk to children about what they are doing and what it is like. They ask questions and listen to children's ideas as they dress the dolls or use chinks to make their seaside display. They make good use of displays and stories to revisit and consolidate what children have been doing and encourage them to take most of their creations home. For example, two-year-olds design and make animals with modelling clay and children take home the giant snails at the weekend and record what they have done at home with their parents. However, some staff do not talk and interact skilfully or enthusiastically with children during meal times

or when children are moving about the nursery or tidying up. This slightly holds back children's communication, social skills, and concentration levels.

Children are helped to extend their knowledge and develop their natural curiosity through real experiences, for example, as they prepare exotic fruits to try, learn about crossing the road or meet the local fire service to talk about safety in the home. Ample time is allowed for children to do as much for themselves as possible so that they understand their environment well and cooperate together, for example, to put the books, calculators and construction things back into their places. Photographs and observations are noted and used to complete assessments and progress records under the 'Birth to three matters' framework. These progress records are well used in the baby room to identify and provide for the next steps in children's development.

Nursery education

The quality of the teaching and learning is good. Consistent, committed staff are able to provide a nurturing atmosphere for three and four year olds so that they are making good progress. A well planned play environment, the input of an early years pedagogue for advice and input, and a commitment to evaluation and planning ensure that all the areas of learning are provided in a way that appeals to children. Staff deploy themselves to support every child's learning and remind children of what is available in other areas of the room. The ethos of free choice is successful for the majority of children attending because they feel in control and can follow their interests. Staff make observation notes when they see a child doing something significant, but observations are too few to be used successfully in clearly planning and providing for individual children's next steps each week.

Children are making good progress in all the areas of learning. Staff are successful in providing for their personal, social and emotional development, using large group times well to help children develop speaking, listening, turn taking and participation skills. Smaller key worker groups are less well developed but children enjoy good relationships together, are actively listened to and are given time to make choices and talk about their wishes and feelings. Each child has a developmental file containing varied evidence of their work in observation note, photo and profile form. Most examples of work are dated and explain how they show what the child can do.

Key staff have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and how children learn. They observe, plan and provide the six areas of learning very well. They are successfully bringing in more problem solving challenges through discussion, role play and creative activities, so that children are developing initiative. For example, they find containers and materials that they want to decant and measure sand, thread beads onto a string to make a necklace or glue their model helicopter back together. Children are developing a good understanding of their environment and how communities work. For example, they have learnt to respect the books which they look at, they remind each other to clear up things that have dropped onto the floor, they remember to put their aprons on in the messy area and they watch their stick insects and giant snails with interest.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally independent, confident and considerate learners because most of the staff are good role models and design the environment to make it welcoming. Children can see their name hooks and have individual trays in which to put their things. However, they are

seldom greeted by their key worker and there are not many photos displayed at their level around the walls to heighten their sense of belonging. Nevertheless, children enjoy seeing their siblings when they play outside together or when they combine at the beginning of the day if they are early starters. Managers are welcoming and accessible throughout the day handling information about individual children to pass onto room leaders. However, this results in parents spending less time talking to key workers and digesting information about what children are doing from the planning and feedback displayed in the base rooms.

Children have adequate opportunities to consider and value diversity because there are sufficient resources, activity ideas and positive images to promote children's awareness of diverse cultures and disabilities. Competence and knowledge about supporting children with learning difficulties and disabilities has been gained through the training and experience of the 'Senco' and cascaded to staff. Staff have satisfactory skill in managing behaviour and developing children's social skills. This is because staff are mostly deployed consistently to work with the same age range. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children mostly behave well, use good manners and are able to share, care for one another and cooperate because staff model appropriate play skills and clearly explain what is expected of children.

There are behaviour, equal opportunities, parent partnership and additional needs policies in place which apply to all the settings owned by the organisation. Likewise, the system for recording incidents involving behaviour is adopted across the organisation. However, in practice, incident records do not provide for explanation about how the unwanted behaviour was managed, focussing instead on the treatment of the victim or injured party. This holds back work with parents to manage children's behaviour jointly.

The quality of partnerships with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children receive consistency of care because staff and managers forge supportive relationships with parents and obtain good quality consents and child details from the outset. However, many parents do not know who their child's key worker is and have little idea about the curriculum and what their child is enjoying and achieving in nursery. They do not see developmental records unless they come to twice yearly parents evenings and few take an active part in extending their child's learning at home. Efforts are already being made to provide documentation about what children are enjoying and achieving through regular newsletters and weekly display sheets indicating particular activities that have been enjoyed. In addition, an individual learning plan is now being sent home with reports to show what is being focussed upon to help children take their individual next steps. Parents seen on the day of inspection are impressed with the nursery refurbishment and the quality of the food and drink. Leavers' returned questionnaires indicate high levels of satisfaction with the nursery and children's social skills and preparedness for school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are well protected and cared for by a high proportion of trained, up to date and motivated staff, all of whom are vetted. Staff are well supported by managers who spend time in the nursery itself and provide meetings, training and models of good practice so that individual staff can continue to develop. Staff have thorough inductions, individual appraisals and specialist responsibilities in the setting so that they are motivated to progress. The nursery public areas are well organised to offer information about daily routines, activity plans and the policies and procedures of the nursery. This includes a series of photo albums showing how the children's diverse play activities are leading to their learning and development.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The office is well organised and managers are accessible to all staff and parents. They evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning effectively and come up with practical ways of improving outcomes for children. For example, they have introduced a document to improve the experience of moving up to the next room. This is designed to ensure that parents know when visits start to next room, know the actual date of the move and have an introduction to the new key worker. It also prompts staff to pass on special dietary requirements, inform the kitchen, create new peg and labels for the child and pass on the updated development plan on time. Similarly, plans to improve children's understanding of the community and world around them are being put into practice, for example, by inviting the local fire service to the setting.

Staff deployment contributes generally well to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Staff ratios are maintained by consistent full time staff who know children well and managers provide necessary cover so that children know who is looking after them. Policies and procedures are suitable and work in practice to promote good outcomes for children. Children's enrolment details are accessibly, but confidentially stored so that necessary details can be referred to support consistency of care. Detailed consents for all aspects of children's care are obtained from parents to ensure that individual needs and wishes are known and taken account of. Parents can read about the policies and procedures of the setting because these are displayed for them and copies of revised policies are sent home. An anonymous version of the complaints record is made available to parents and Ofsted's contact details are displayed. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were five recommendations for care and five recommendations for nursery education made at the last inspection in November 2005. These have mostly been completed to improve the quality of care and nursery education.

Standards of equipment have been improved to provide children with access to drinks, plates for all snacks and meals, sufficient first aid boxes and safe flooring. Higher quality play resources are in place, including both toys which show positive images of various cultures and disabilities, and natural and live materials to allow children to begin an appreciation of the world in which they live. Risk assessments and checklists are also used to improve the identification and resolution of risks such as a loose drain cover and unfixed fire extinguisher. However, the system in place to provide individual drinks of fresh water in the pre-school does not work satisfactorily because bottles are not cleaned and refilled until midday, some taps are loose and faulty, and paper towels are not in place in the pre-school toilets in the morning.

The standard of delivery of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum are both improved because staff understand these better. They make records and assessments and plan regularly together. Staff deployment is more consistent so that staff mostly work in the same rooms. However, the regularity of individual observations and the use of these and the progress record to make individualised plans is still minimal.

The availability of information to parents about the running of the nursery is improved. There is a suggestions box and posters display the complaints procedure and how to contact Ofsted. Updated policies about complaints, medications and nut allergies have been sent to parents' homes and details of children's allergies and intolerances are kept accessible to staff in all rooms to assure children's health and safety.

Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy more access to resources supporting mathematical development and communication, language and literacy and are choosing to look at books, to make marks and to solve number problems. Their self-help and independence is now more encouraged, for example serving at meal times, although this is not always consistent and some children are less competent with hand washing, nose blowing and dressing.

Complaints since the last inspection

Ofsted received concerns in February 2006 relating to National Standard 2, Organisation; National Standard 3, Care, learning and play; and National Standard 7, Health. A childcare inspector visited the provision on 10th March 2006. Four actions were raised, concerning staff ratios and deployment; action to identify and minimise safety risks; good hygiene practice; and the accessibility of fire escape exits. A monitoring visit was undertaken by a childcare inspector on 25th April 2006. The actions were satisfactorily met by the registered provider who remains qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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):

- ensure that the systems already in place work hygienically to make fresh drinking water individually available throughout the day and ensure that children are enabled to develop maximum independence in maintaining their own health and hygiene
- improve the quality of staff interactions and key worker relationships with individual children throughout the all routines of the day to consistently maximise children's sense of belonging, enjoyment and progress
- ensure that incidents involving behaviour are recorded clearly and the systems known by all staff so that the records can be used to support joint work with parents and assist in the resolution of complaints where applicable.

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):

- extend the frequency of observations and use these and children's records continuously in order to inform the work that key workers do and to help each child maximise their progress (applies to all rooms)

- ensure that key workers develop strong relationships with their group of children and parents so that parents understand the curriculum and can work closely with staff to maximise their child's progress.

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