

Busy Bees Nursery Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY364501
Inspection date	20 June 2008
Inspector	Paula Jane Hayhow
Setting Address	Flitwick Lower School, Temple Way, Flitwick, BEDFORD, MK45 1LU
Telephone number	07939 997131
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Registered person	The Trustees of Busy Bees Nursery Group
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 Nursery Group opened in 2007. It is managed by a voluntary committee. The pre-school operates from a purpose built mobile classroom within Flitwick Lower School campus, in Flitwick in Bedfordshire.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:15 until 11:45 and 12:45 to 15:15 term time only. The group operate a lunch club from 11:45 to 12:45 daily. All children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 51 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 36 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area which includes surrounding villages and towns. The group have systems in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs 10 staff. Six of the staff members, including the pre-school leader hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an airy, light and clean environment. The group organise the snack session as a social event and ensure that the children have time to eat their snacks, chat to their neighbour and discuss subjects, such as where does cheese come from, what their favourite sandwiches are and how many pieces of fruit they have in their dish. There are informative and colourful posters relating to the importance of eating five pieces of fruit or vegetables a day and children's placement mats have pictures of these healthy options thus encouraging their fuller knowledge of the subject. Parents are kept well informed of the weekly snack through the displayed menu on the notice board and they are given advice on the importance of healthy options and the need for ice packed in their children's lunch boxes. The children are offered healthy snacks such as cheese, bread sticks, banana and apples. The snacks are organised to include fresh ingredients low in sugar, salt, fat, colouring, preservatives and additives. The children's special requirements with regard to diet are well documented, confidentiality kept and abided by at all times.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health. They develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills as they participate in structured activities, such as actions rhymes, parachute games, music sessions or balancing on pirate ropes and planks. The children have access to an outdoor play area where they use climbing apparatus and ride on toys such as bicycles and trucks. They play with drain pipes, cardboard boxes, listen to wind chimes and love digging out the sand on the slopes with their spades filling their trucks and burrowing into the holes. The use of small equipment such as pencils, glue spreaders, rolling pins, scissors and small construction pieces aid the development of children's finer manipulative skills. The children are learning appropriate hygiene practices, for example, they wash their hands before snack, after using craft mediums but do not always discuss the relevance of this. Children's health in an emergency situation is promoted because there is a high number of staff members trained in first aid and the contents of the first aid box is checked regularly.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment where their work is creatively displayed and resources are appealingly arranged for easy accessibility. Children use toys, resources and furniture that are appropriate for their size and developmental stage and resources are continually checked by staff ensuring that they remain safe and suitable for the children to use. Children independently select toys and activities from a wide range of good quality play materials. Toy boxes are labelled and some include pictures of their contents for easy recognition. The environment is organised to enable children to move safely from one activity to another, indoors or outside as staff ratios are high and they are suitably deployed. Children's welfare is given a high priority as staff have a good understanding of child protection procedures and have attended additional training to ensure that they are able to report and follow up any concerns.

Children's safety is prioritised and staff carry out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. However, when clearing the sand away it is not always removed thoroughly enough, which could cause slips and falls. Children have a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are

consistently given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking, as they line up carefully so as not to bump into each other, not running indoors and tidying toys away in order to prevent accidents. Pictorial prompts are displayed where the children line up and they point these out to each other as reminders. Children regularly carry out fire drills, practise road safety on their walks and are taught the rudiments of stranger danger.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled. The staff get to know the family and children well when they first start pre-school through the settling-in period when they find out what activities the children enjoy and their particular ways of learning. Staff plan stimulating themes and projects, ensuring that children are well supported through high staff ratios and good deployment. The children can receive individual attention when needed and all are encouraged to participate in the activities offered. The children are developing their confidence and make good relationships with each other, many having a particular friend they sit with or read books together with. The children happily discuss their activities with staff, telling them about their favourite super hero and proudly showing them their completed work. Children's personal development and self-confidence are promoted through caring support and genuine encouragement and praise from staff. The staff ensure that the activities are appropriate for the differing ages and abilities of the children attending. When the children are involved in a story the staff judge well the suitability of the questions, for example, asking the younger children to point to the items they like whilst the older children are asked to discuss in more detail the furniture they would like in their houses, which room it will be put in and why they have chosen those particular items. The children participate in mark-making exercises such as writing their name on their work, listing what to take on holiday or documenting what the customers would like to eat in the Chinese restaurant and take away. This enables all children present to participate at their own level of ability and gain some understanding of early writing skills.

Children's interest is maintained and their natural inquisitiveness is encouraged because they are able to freely access the resources, exploring these to determine their own play. The play area is set up in designated areas, which the children know and they are encouraged to move freely from one activity to another. Staff make good use of open questions to encourage the children to think further and extend their knowledge, such as asking children the colour, number, size or shape of an article. They discuss topics, such as the oceans and seas of the world, making friezes relating to this. They plant herbs and enjoy smelling, tending, watering and watching them grow. The children enjoy investigating different textures, such as shaving foam, sand, salt dough, clay, corn-flour or making pavement and coin rubbings. Staff are good at assessing when they need to intercede and when to allow children's natural creativity to develop, such as the children making dens for themselves or trains from chairs, deciding where to go and calling 'all aboard' when it is time to go.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and their overall development is promoted because staff have a good knowledge of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage and combine this with their experience and knowledge of child development. Most of the activities are child-initiated, with staff providing support and encouragement when needed. Children's progress is balanced as staff have developed various planning and assessment methods. Each staff member takes a turn in organising the week's activities and they all document any of the children's achievements through the written word,

photographs or samples of their craft work. These are recorded in the children's assessment files. Children's achievements are linked to the six areas of learning. However, the written assessments do not clearly show children's starting points, which could lead to a delay in highlighting potential areas of concern and assessing early progress. Staff observe, monitor and record the children's progress periodically. However, the planning and assessment documents do not consistently evaluate the activity or the children's achievements, thus limiting useful information for future planning. Children's knowledge and understanding is not fully promoted as activity plans do not consistently contain sufficient detail regarding extending the activity for the more and less-able children. This could lead to missed opportunities to promote and develop children's full knowledge and understanding.

Children participate in a wide range of activities which includes imaginative role play scenarios, music, construction, technology, outdoor play and a variety of crafts activities. For example, the children have regular opportunities to paint, chalk, crayon, glue and cut different mediums. Children interact with others, initiating conversations and using language to explain their thoughts and make sense of the world around them. An example of this is a group of children discussing holidays; they decide that where there is a lot of sand it can be called a beach, one child telling the others he went on holiday in an aeroplane and 'if you can go swimming you will need a swimming costume'. Staff developed this theme by asking the children if they wanted to write a holiday list of things they would need to take. Children show a developing awareness of their own needs and are able to meet these, for example, using the bathroom facilities independently, washing their hands, pouring their own drink, putting used cups and plates in the washing up bowl and managing to put their coats and shoes on.

Children are gaining knowledge of their community through the provision of a range of resources and activities. These include visits from the reception teacher, music teacher, crossing patrol person as well as home pets such as the African snail and frogspawn from the pond. The children enjoy visits to the local library for story time and to look at books. They are developing an appreciation of technical equipment when using the computer, mouse, telephones, calculators, hole punch and binoculars. Children participate in construction activities and show developing skills in these areas, for example, children playing with bricks are able to build both vertically and horizontally, working out which size and shape is needed. Children are encouraged to gain an appreciation of change through activities, such as investigating the differing seasons, how much rain has fallen through the observation and recording of their home-made water collectors, the mixing of the cooking ingredients together or using the cheese grater for melting the topping on the pizzas.

Children have opportunities for mark-making to develop early writing skills, for example, writing post cards, drawing, chalking, painting shapes like circles, as well as routinely writing their names on their craft work. They recognise some letters such as the first and second letters of their names and most children can recognise their name cards. Daily stories and puppet shows encourage children's understanding of subjects, such as the consequences of getting lost in the wood, falling asleep in the bear's house and the different materials the three pigs used to make their homes. The children enjoy the repetition of these stories and rhymes and happily repeat them back to each other. Some children like to write their own stories in a pictorial form and feed this back to the children at circle time, telling them about the tree house on fire and how the builder had to mend it.

Children are developing their understanding of the concept of numbers and use mathematics to solve everyday problems, for example, when singing number rhymes the children can isolate the correct number of fingers, recognise the numbers on the number line and can note which

number comes before and after their one. They use mathematical language when playing, such as describing the biggest tower, largest circle and telling their friends the washing machine in the home corner has finished as the dial has gone back to zero. The children measure and record their height and are able to identify who is the tallest and shortest person. Children's physical development is promoted well as they develop an awareness of different forms of movement through organised activities, such as music and movement sessions, parachute games, use of musical instruments and action rhymes such as 'Here we go round the mulberry bush', 'The Farmer's in his den' or the pirate song where the children jump forwards and backwards in the song. The garden is well equipped and the children have many opportunities to jump, crawl through the tunnel, pedal, balance and climb on the apparatus provided.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and respected as individuals. Each child has a key worker who is chosen after the child has started and made a relationship with one of the staff. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities and resources to promote their understanding of society and increase their awareness of other cultures and ways of life. These include celebrations connected with Chinese New Year, Diwali, Ramadan, Easter and various Saint Days such as Saint Patrick's, Saint David's and Saint Valentine's Day. Children gain further understanding of this through discussion and craft work linked to these festivals, such as learning about lent, making pancakes and carrying out pancake races. They enjoy scenarios, such as pretend Chinese and Indian restaurants where they learn about the foods from that land as well as dressing up in costumes, such as kimonos and saris. Children are kind and thoughtful to each other and to staff. They make friends and include them in their games, save seats for them at story time and take them for rides on the double bicycles. They are concerned about new children being upset and will go to them to give them a hug or kiss to 'make them better'. Children's behaviour is good throughout the session as they choose their activities and competently organise turn taking and sharing. For example, lining up for outdoor play, children know this short wait is to help them be safe. They respond well to staff, and the positive approach and good staff role modelling promotes good behaviour and good manners, such as helping to pack away the toys cheerfully and remembering to say 'please', 'thank you' and 'pardon me' when burping. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

There are clear and thorough systems and practical policies in place for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff members have implemented these, and worked sensitively with individual children and their parents to make sure that all are included in the daily activities and routines. Communication books which are filled in by the families and staff keep both parties informed of the children's daily happenings which aid discussion with the children who may have difficulties making themselves fully understood. Children's needs are well documented and met because staff have a good relationship with parents. An informative prospectus, policies and procedures explain to parents the aims and objectives of the setting. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to feel part of the setting through the use of newsletters, suggestion box, an informative parent's notice board, parent working rota and an open door policy encouraging them to discuss any concerns they may have or advice needed.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are given good quality information about the Curriculum for the foundation stage, with photographic examples and explanations documented in the prospectus, curriculum folder and wall displays. Parents are well informed about their child's progress through informal and formal consultations with key worker staff, activity documents on the notice board and regular questionnaires relating to the running of

the group. They have access to their children's profiles and assessment sheets and are encouraged to make suggestions relating to possible themes and their own child's particular interests. This positive attitude helps ensure that parents' views are valued, standards maintained and appropriate care provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Overall the needs of the children are met. Children's play opportunities are encouraged by the good organisation of space, allowing them the freedom to move independently from one activity to another. Good organisation of all play areas ensures that children are offered a wide range of stimulating activities and opportunities both within the building and outside. Resources are easily accessible with labelled toy boxes and designated areas for differing play materials, such as the home corner, mark making table, craft work and a comfortable, cosy book area. The children are therefore confident to initiate their own play and learning. Children's welfare, care and safety are consistently promoted through the support provided by experienced and qualified staff who ensure that the pre-school's policies and procedures are put into practice on a daily basis. There are sound procedures in place for checking that all staff are suitable to work with children and this is supported by a clear induction process for new staff, ensuring that all are able to work appropriately with the children. There are regular development reviews of staff's practice and training needs and meetings to organise the planning and working practice which ensure that the pre-school's policies and procedures are understood and consistently applied. Daily discussions, before and after the play sessions, keep all staff up to date with each child's individual needs and how the activities and play sessions are evaluated. Children's welfare is maintained because staff share in the responsibility for the organisation of the play sessions, all children's records and documents. These are confidentially and securely kept in a locked filing cabinet. Staff are actively involved in evaluating and improving their own practice and work closely, together with the committee, to improve and enhance the care and welfare of the children. For example, suggestion boxes for parents and action plans are regularly undertaken. Staff work closely together to plan and coordinate the activities and routines for the children.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Children's overall welfare is promoted by the clear understanding that the play leader has of her role and responsibilities, ensuring that she is aware of all regulations. She ensures that all policies and procedures are adhered to, regularly evaluating the play session and discussing improvement with the staff. The play leader acts as a good role model, attending additional training and demonstrating her enthusiasm and enjoyment of her daily work with children. Staff feel motivated and are dedicated to creating a positive atmosphere within the setting. All sessions are well planned, with a broad and balanced range of activities throughout the day. The play leader monitors and evaluates the play opportunities through parent's questionnaires, discussions with children and staff, parent consultations and any issues identified are actioned promptly. Snack time is offered when children wish to take their break which ensures the children can play uninterrupted on their chosen activity. Children are given sufficient time and resources to enable them to complete their activities and tasks. Their progress is tracked through ongoing assessments and monitoring. Staff organise the planning of future work, ensuring that the needs of individuals are met and the development of all children is promoted. The children's learning is re-evaluated regularly to ensure that all areas are consistently being covered.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- develop procedures at hand washing time to encourage children's full understanding of the rationale of these hygiene practices
- continue to assess and ensure children's safety in all areas throughout the day. This particularly refers to the sand on the floor areas.

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 methods for assessing children so that these show their starting point so that progress can be charted and any issues highlighted at an early stage
- develop planning to include how activities will be extended for the more and less-able child and improve the evaluation systems so that they clearly identify children's achievements and show the progression the children have made.

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