

Bath Opportunity Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY358002
Inspection date	11 July 2008
Inspector	Sue Vernon
Setting Address	Three Ways School, 180 Frome Road, BATH, BA2 5RF
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Registered person	The Trustees of Bath Opportunity Pre-School
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bath Opportunity Pre-school is a setting run by trustees of a registered charity and is registered primarily for children with special educational and care needs. The group registered at the new Threeways School site in Bath in 2007, though it has been running since 1979 at other sites in Bath. The new building offers two play rooms, two other rooms, access to two therapy rooms and associated facilities. There are enclosed outdoor play areas for outdoor play. The group is registered for a maximum of 26 children under five and currently has 44 children on roll, 39 of whom have learning difficulties /disabilities and 18 of whom receive funding for nursery education.

The group is open weekdays in term times from 09.45 to 12.15 and also from 13.15 to 15.45 except on Wednesdays and Fridays, with a lunch session available between sessions. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group may offer a holiday club at a later date. A variety of specialist teachers and therapists visit the group to work with parents and children.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The group works exceptionally hard to ensure that they are completely aware of each child's individual medical needs before they start in the group. Extensive discussions are held with both parents and relevant medical professionals such as physiotherapists and health visitors. Staff receive specialised training from medical staff such as district nurses if necessary, in order to support any detailed medical needs. This ensures that parents are reassured and secure, and each child's individual needs are supported excellently. Staff are first aid trained and kits are available in each room as well as on outings. Children's health is well protected by a detailed written sickness policy which is shared with all parents consistently explaining why infectious children are not accepted. This means that all children, as well as those who are more susceptible are well protected from possible cross-infection. Any medication records are detailed and securely kept, as are records of any accidents. Records are shared with parents as appropriate and stored securely.

Staff have an exceptionally positive approach to developing their knowledge of different conditions. They attend extensive training and arrange regular advisory visits from health professionals and advisors from professional support groups such as the Autistic Society. This results in staff developing their skills very effectively in order to support each child and enable each child to gain the most from their attendance in the group. Staff spread their knowledge to mainstream groups such as local nurseries by holding workshops and discussions. This helps benefit children who attend both the Opportunity Group and other settings as well as helping other childcare staff to become more aware of how to support and include each child according to their individual needs.

Children's health is very well supported by a knowledgeable staff team who are involved in a healthy eating project. A wide variety of healthy food is offered at snack times. Each day, a good selection of fresh fruit pieces such as strawberries, orange slices and banana are offered along with dried fruit. Rice cakes are available for children requiring a gluten free diet. Children are offered choices and various systems such as picture cards are used to help all children learn how to communicate their preferences. Children learn more about healthy eating through topic work and books about healthy eating habits. They enjoy tasting different foods and cooking together. Staff and parents learn more about healthy eating through nutrition workshops and posters encouraging healthy foods which are displayed in the joint staff and parent's room. Any specific dietary needs are very carefully discussed with parents and are very well known to all staff. Information is securely available in all rooms and the kitchen where food is prepared. The group works very hard to support each child's specific dietary needs which means both parents and children feel secure.

All ages of children have excellent opportunities for developing their physical skills. Physical play is built into the daily sessions using both an attractive covered outdoor area as well as play opportunities with a good range of resources in each room. Planning ensures that all children enjoy climbing and sliding on the climbing frame or developing their large muscles with peddling specially designed tricycles and other play equipment. They develop their dexterity by using beads for threading or simple tools with play dough. Children enjoy trying musical instruments or fixing puzzles together with very close individual support. Staff plan excellent opportunities which are carefully tailored to meet each child's individual needs and stage of ability.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety is given a very high priority. Effective safety systems are in place in the group which is housed in a purpose built, sole use unit. For example, all rooms have special door security and comprehensive risk assessments are used in identify and minimise risks effectively in order to provide safe areas for the children to play and explore safely. Suitable safety equipment is in place such as special wooden safety gates which demarcate play areas in the attractive entrance area. This enables both parents and children to feel welcome and safe as they move into the room areas. Rooms are set out with clear thought given to meeting children's play and care needs as well as their safety. For example, very attractive storage units thread through the space showing toys and resources at children's level. This enables children of all mobility levels to see and make choices in their play. Equipment has been carefully selected in order to meet the needs of the different levels of ability, for example, low tables and chairs with extra supports enable all children to share table play safely together. The safe layout of the rooms facilitates free play for the children, some of whom find it more difficult than others to settle. For example, children on the autistic spectrum can safely move around as they try home play with dolls and wooden kitchen resources or try art activities at the attractive white board easel units.

The environment is very clean, bright and attractive. The group has a vibrant atmosphere which is welcoming to both parents and children alike. There is an excellent range of information displayed in order to build parent's knowledge of the group. This is achieved with notice boards, staff photographs, a white board display of specialist visitors and the extra activities happening in the group each day. Parents are valued and are encouraged to spend time in the group. They freely access an attractive room, shared with staff where they can relax and meet together. Children's work and photographs of recent activities are displayed around which children and parents enjoy discussing.

Staff are keenly aware of child protection issues and their role in supporting the safeguarding of children. They continue to extend their knowledge through additional training and all are aware of the required procedures to be followed should any concerns arise. Written procedures are shared with parents and new staff cover these in their comprehensive induction programme. This supports all the staff team working together in promoting children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from the high level of commitment shown by all staff. Children's needs are assessed very effectively. Individual care plans are completed with parents before each child starts which includes full information about children's abilities, medical needs and any special equipment they might need. This information is used well to help the child settle into the group and start building sound relationships with staff. Staff are very highly motivated to meet the particular needs of each child and draw on specialist support such as advice from the children's disability team or speech therapists. All work together consistently well with parents to complete targets for each child which are reviewed and redrawn regularly. Activities are well planned and bright attractive resources are prepared before each session to meet the needs of the children attending. Each child is highly valued and encouraged through close work with a high ratio of staff. Staff select a particular learning activity which meets the next stage of learning and development for each child such as matching picture cards to names. This is easily accessible and is ready to hand in their tray for one-to-one work. Children are keen to enter as they and

their parents are greeted and welcomed. Children and staff share smiles as they explore play resources together such as when crawling children are helped to explore lights with different changing colours or singing rhymes together.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have an exceptional knowledge of each child's progress and ability, and use this very effectively to plan an excellent range of interesting activities. They have very good knowledge of the learning framework which structures the stimulating play environment and ensures each child experiences a comprehensive learning environment. Activities are well planned and extended effectively as they respond to children's interests or enthusiasms. For example, children extended a topic on 'The Sea' by painting several large boxes for boat play and by putting a blue cloth over a small table and being 'under the sea with the fish' when hiding underneath. This was followed by visits to a nearby garden centre where children enjoyed fish display tanks.

Very clear assessment methods are used to establish each child's starting points and staff plan, observe and evaluate effectively in order to move children on in their learning and general development. Clear progress records are kept along with individual education plans which are freely shared with parents and all therapists involved in supporting each child. This ensures that realistic targets are planned and reviewed regularly in order to assess children's progress and plan effectively for their next stage of learning and developmental needs. Each child has an activity linked to their next stage of learning prepared ready in their tray which key workers bring out for individual work with their child. This builds very clear understanding of each child's level and ensures they are moved on in their abilities.

Strong emphasis is placed on supporting children's personal, social and emotional development. They learn to listen and respond in a variety of ways appropriate to their abilities at circle time as they greet each other and staff. Children are helped to become familiar with the daily routine through picture lines if needed. They are encouraged to share and take turns, for example, at snack time or choosing an animal to sing about during group music sessions. Children are encouraged to develop good relationships with staff and other children as they share one-to-one time, for example, concentrating on puzzles together or enjoying musical instruments. Children are encouraged to develop independence, for example, by having free choice in art and craft work or helping put toys away.

Developing children's communication skills is given a very high priority. Each child has time with speech and language therapists who are based in the group as well as other support from specialists such as advisors from the Autistic Society or Children's Society. Staff help children use a variety of techniques, as needed, such as signing, Makaton and picture card systems in order to support interaction and communication. Children relish books and stories which are presented in a good variety of ways including large books with toys or using a large projector screen linked to the computer. Stories can then be displayed on the big screen whilst staff use signing to engage children in the action. Staff imaginatively use favourite books to encourage social skills such as supporting a child whilst toilet training by reading a favourite story book during bathroom visits. Children develop writing patterns and pre-emergent writing skills on white boards or using combs in glitter trays or mark making in a large sand area on a cover on the floor. Children's attempts at writing are valued as their pictures of themselves with their own writing are displayed. Action rhymes help children develop new words such as 'splat' as they enthusiastically hit the table with their hands during action songs together. Children enjoy linking sounds to letters through games such as lotto or animal board games. Children learn

counting skills as they fit together a talking number puzzle. They learn about using simple mathematical language as they fit construction bricks together or pour more water through tubes in the special low level water tray.

Children have excellent opportunities for being creative. They explore a variety of textures such as foam, sand and water play with tubes and funnels, messy play, and table and hand painting. They have free access to large easel painting boards which include paper areas for drawing. They enjoy dressing-up or imaginative play with home corner kitchen resources or making dens over climbing frames with nets and tunnels. Collage work is enjoyed with free choice of different fabrics and textures such as cotton wool balls. Children enjoy learning about the world around them as they visit local farms and feed lambs and collect eggs. Staff help children learn about growing things as they plant beans and tomatoes outside. Photographs of their activities are stored on the computer and shown on the large screen to help children remember and review their experiences. Children learn about technology as they enjoy using the computer, with help, for simple games. They learn to use the computer mouse or touch screen technology with help, as appropriate. They learn about changes as they mix colours when painting or enjoy cooking cakes and making jelly together. A well equipped sensory room is used to help children learn about colours and patterns as well as cause and effect as they change colours and patterns in fibre optic lights.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children are included and valued owing to a total commitment from the group as a whole to meet each child's needs. The group invite specialist advice workers where necessary to help them draw up individual plans which are continuously reviewed with parents and the staff team. This helps each child to work towards achievable targets which builds their self-esteem effectively. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Each child's contribution is valued and the whole group is planned in order for each child to be fully included in the play opportunities. Understanding of the wider world is fostered through topic work on festivals and books and toys that reflect cultural diversity. Staff offer close support which helps children behave well. Extra training on behaviour management and advice from the children's disability social work team help staff promote positive methods effectively. For example, staff have picture cards on them of 'good hands' to use as a pictorial prompt to children who might not be managing their reactions appropriately. This is re-enforced with special books and discussions. The group also uses an excellent system called 'wow' cards which are used by both parents and staff to celebrate a children's particular achievement, however small either at home or in the group. This builds parent's involvement in their child's development very effectively and builds children's self-esteem very well. All the staff team act as excellent role models, being calm, patient and caring. Comprehensive records and policies are in place detailing the group's aims and routines which are shared with parents. This builds their understanding of the group well and supports their involvement.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. The ethos of the group is to value and support parents and respect their situation. The group have highly effective systems in place to gather information from parents before the child starts which includes full discussions about any medical care, food allergies or special equipment needed. Staff are vigilant about supporting each child and are proactive in ensuring they have the correct equipment such as chairs with supports so that each child can be included in all activities. Parents are valued and included at all stages of their child's involvement with the group. They are welcomed at all times and value the very flexible settling-in process which builds their confidence at leaving their child. The

shared staff and parent room is a testament to the value placed on the role of the parents. Parents receive clear guidance on the policies and procedures of the group and excellent information is also offered such as contacts for specific advisory groups. All parents highly value the quality of their child's experience in the group and the effort that the staff take to build their confidence and include them at all stages. They talk daily to staff and meet regularly to discuss their child's learning and development. They also view their child's progress records as well as contributing to the individual plans at meetings held every six weeks. Open evenings welcome all members of the family to view and discuss children's work and progress books. This helps all the family to feel involved and valued.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The committee, management and all of the staff team are completely focused on providing the best possible outcomes for all the children who attend, including nursery education funded children. Their ethos is to consistently strive to develop their skills through evaluative and reflective practice. The staff team and managers work proactively together and are very well supported by the voluntary committee. All staff work towards developing their skills through both in-house training, specialist workshops and professional training. Staff appraisals are carried out and targets set for future development. This benefits the children as staff are committed to improving how to support and enable all children to progress in their learning and development. The staff team also work with other nurseries and groups attended by the children in order to share their knowledge and ensure the child's needs continue to be met. Planning for learning development is fully in place and linked effectively to observations and children's records. Staff also respond confidently to children's interests and use their skills effectively to extend their learning.

Comprehensive staff recruitment systems are in place in order to ensure the suitability of staff employed. Excellent induction processes are used with new staff which ensure consistency in the staff team. For example, all policies and procedures are shared with new staff and their comments for further improving them are invited and discussed at the regular staff meetings. A comprehensive operational plan is effective in ensuring that the provision is well organised and that sessions run smoothly. The group consistently evaluate their practice, for example, by completing assessment systems such as the Bristol Standard. Rooms are very well planned and organised to meet the children's care and play needs. Appropriate equipment is ready such as specialist chairs which ensure children can be well supported and included effectively. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

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.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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