

Busy Bees at Bernard Street

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	123546
Inspection date	28/05/2009
Inspector	Lynne Kathleen Talbot
Setting address	52 Bernard Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5QN
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Busy Bees Day Nursery opened in 1991. The provision operates from a purpose built building and is situated to the rear of Bernard Street in St. Albans. The building is accessed via ramp access. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area. The provision is open each weekday all year and sessions are from 07:15 to 18:45. A maximum of 50 children may attend the provision at any one time. The setting receives funding for Nursery Education. The setting is registered on the Early Years Register.

There are currently 70 children on roll, all of whom are within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Five children attend other settings such as the early years unit of the local primary school or childminders. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language. There are 22 staff members. Of these, 11 hold relevant childcare qualifications and five are completing training to achieve a recognised childcare qualification.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. The provision provides very effectively for children within the EYFS ensuring that every child is fully included and makes good progress in their learning and development. Planning is creative, individually organised, and thorough, building on the strides made by the children. Staff and management create a very welcoming environment making sure that safety is paramount with excellent procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment, continuous monitoring and extending children's own understanding. Exemplary links with parents help to involve them in their child's care and education and those relationships, together with secure partnerships with other settings, ensure that children thrive. Procedures for self-evaluation are robust and ensure continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop the use of planning and assessment; ensure that a baseline assessment, involving parents, informs the planning
- encourage children to use their communication, language and literacy skills, and mark making in a range of situations and for a range of purposes.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Comprehensive policies and procedures ensure that all children's needs are met. The managers and staff are fully conversant with daily procedures to check that all hazards are minimised thereby ensuring that children may move around learning

independently. Risk assessments fully address all areas inside, outdoors and during outings with fire audits and a 'grab pack' prepared for emergency evacuation. Security is systematic with viewing windows in all areas and the main door being secured for internal release only. There is a thorough recruitment and induction system which means that all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Systems include ongoing supervision every three months, annual appraisals and room meetings as well as regular staff meetings. The robust self-evaluation procedures mean that the staff team have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for development and can implement change to improve outcomes for children. This is evidenced by the action plans completed and reviewed each month. Staff attend training such as safeguarding and 'someone to turn to', as well as extensive in-house training; this ensures continued development.

The nursery is extremely inviting, largely well-resourced and provides scope for all areas of development inside and outdoors, as children enjoy free-flow outdoor play at all ages. Children become self-motivated learners, freely accessing resources. Managers and staff demonstrate dedication and commitment to maintaining excellent partnerships with parents. Methods to support this include biannual meetings, liaison meetings with parent representatives, e-mail links for new parents and training meetings arranged for parents in various topics. Partnership is shown by the 'you said-we did' response regarding improvements made. Parents and children have five sessions to settle into the setting where general care is exchanged in preparation for learning journals and they contribute to forward planning by contributing 'home observations'. However, at this time the provision has yet to formalise their system to involve parents in developing a baseline starting point for children. Staff are pro-active in addressing issues of inclusion for every child, using 'communication for me' sheets where English may be an additional language, and working closely adhering to any programmes set by other professionals. Links with other settings are established meaning that complimentary care may be given to benefit children.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are consistently offered a stimulating range of activities that enable them to make very good progress in all areas of learning and development. Detailed observations and assessments ensure that the individual needs of every child are fully met. These are used to identify the next areas of learning for each child which fully feed the planning of activities. Staff respond positively to children's interests and offer experimental play to develop creativity. For example, babies and younger children take part in creative works with feathers, felts and other tactile materials making collage and sticking pictures rather than using pens or crayons. This supports their concentration and offers new experiences which are satisfying. They explore mounds of shredded paper with delight learning naturally about weight, colour, shape, size, filling vessels, work in groups to 'hide' the staff, and exploring their language as they describe what they and others are doing.

Children show increasing confidence in using language. For instance, they explain the story of their book to staff describing how frogs grow from tadpoles and that they live in ponds. Children ask questions about what they see such as when they

view a timer in a book. They then lead on to discuss the water bottles shown, confidently able to estimate which bottle would take the shortest time to empty if it were being poured and using problem solving. However, despite being creative and enjoying drawing and art works, children do not yet independently explore their literacy skills using mark-making for a purpose, which means their development of this area is limited. Children enthusiastically learn about their local community as well as the wider world. They are animated as they take part in Spanish lessons with the visiting teacher confidently using the language they have learnt and enjoying using an interactive Smart board. They increase their confidence in speaking in groups as they listen to each other and sing with enthusiasm together. Children have opportunities to become aware of current events completing activities during events such as making flower displays for the Chelsea Flower Show, learning about Italy during Italian Day, or taking part in National Health Week.

Children consider early science and investigate when they work in a group to construct a landscape with a volcano. They are able to review photographs and explain how adding vinegar and bicarbonate of soda makes the volcano erupt. They lead play activities to which staff respond. Such as when playing with dressing-up clothes as firefighters, children lead on to drawing around one child making a firefighter that they can all colour for the wall and review non-fiction books about the fire service. This is an example of a child-led activity that will lead into a planned topic of International Firefighter Day. Children thrive in this safe and stimulating setting having ample opportunities to explore their physical capabilities at all ages. They have free movement between indoor and outdoor areas with astro turf laid to enable babies to enjoy their own designated area with free movement. All ages of children take part in 'Tiny Mites' active and singing sessions from a visiting organisation. Puppets, some simple signing and music enthrall all children who pay close attention and take part. They follow a 'stretch and grow' programme to address healthy eating and it's link to physical activity. They plant vegetables such as tomatoes, potatoes and beans that are later used in meals that they enjoy. An additional newsletter entitled 'Exerciting News' is shared with parents to support a joint approach to health.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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