



Busy Builders

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 103793

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Inspector Virginia Cooper

Setting Address Shaw Memorial Hall, Rock Avenue, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 5PW

Telephone number 01634 579722/0794906

E-mail

Registered person Busy Builders Playgroup

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?

Busy Builders Pre-School opened in 1990 and operates from one room in a church hall in Gillingham, Kent. All children share occasional access to the vicarage garden, a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The setting opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are Mondays from 12:30 to 15:00, Tuesdays from 09:00 to 11:30, and Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

from 09:00 to 11:30 and from 12:30 to 15:00.

There are currently 25 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. The pre-school serves the local area. The pre-school is not currently supporting any children with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs five staff. Four staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. Four staff are currently on training programmes to enhance their qualifications. The setting receives support from a teacher from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The youngest children and those just starting at the group are nurtured until they feel confident and secure about leaving their main carers. They relate well to the staff and express how they are feeling, enabling them to have their needs met. They are encouraged to be independent, but ask for assistance readily if they are learning a new skill or feel unsure about something.

Toddlers nappies are changed when necessary to keep them comfortable. The staff prevent cross infection by adopting sensible hygiene procedures. Children independently use the toilet; the staff provide a step to help them reach. They have also provided a smaller seat to help children feel secure while they use the toilet.

Children wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after messy play. They are learning the importance of good hand washing procedures.

The opportunities for children to play outside in the fresh air are limited, however they still undertake a variety of physical activities. Children move confidently, imaginatively and safely. They move with control and show awareness of space, of themselves and of others. They are calm and do not invade one another's personal space, for example they all rode the toy cars in the same direction to prevent any accidents. They have opportunities to practice new skills like throwing and catching balls, balancing and climbing. Children handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. They are mastering the art of using scissors and other hand held tools.

The staff have good procedures in place about the administration of medication to ensure parents are well informed and children are not given anything that is unsuitable. The staff do not care for children who are contagious, ensuring children are not at risk of cross-infection. Children who become poorly whilst attending the group are comforted and made comfortable until their parents are able to collect them.

The staff hold current first aid qualifications; they have a first aid kit that is checked and replenished as necessary. They are able to administer first aid to children in the event of an accident or emergency. The staff record any accidents and any first aid that is administered whilst the children are in their care. This results in parents being well informed about what has happened to their child.

Staff record children's dietary needs to ensure they are not given any food that is unsuitable. The staff have agreed with parents the snacks they will eat; parents help to provide appropriate food. There is always cereal, crackers and toast available for children if they are hungry. Children often eat fresh fruit; they know this is healthy food. Children always have access to drinks; they visit the snack bar whenever they are thirsty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a clean and well-ordered environment allowing them to move around easily and safely. They occasionally play in the vicar's garden next door, this outdoor play area is fully enclosed and children cannot wander off. The environment is carefully prepared before children arrive allowing them instant access on arrival to play and learning activities. Staff greet parents and children on arrival; their arrival and departure is recorded and the children's safety at these times is considered. They cannot access areas that are hazardous, keeping them safe.

The group display their registration certificate, resulting in parents knowing the conditions of their registration.

Toys and resources selected carefully for their suitability and these are checked regularly to ensure there are no broken parts that could harm a child. Children use child sized furniture; this enables them to manage tasks more easily.

The staff carry out a risk assessment of the premises, the potential hazards and risks are identified and sensible precautions have been taken to keep children safe. The exits are well supervised and children cannot open fire doors easily, but consideration is required as to how staff will be alerted quickly if a child attempts this.

The staff understand their role in the protection of children, some have recently undertaken child protection training and have an understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse. They feel confident that they would recognise if a child were being abused and understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child in their care ensuring their protection. Children are always in the direct care of the staff and therefore will never experience the unsupervised company of unsuitable adults. The staff know the action they would take in the event of any allegation of abuse and neglect and if they notice any child has an existing injury, but the procedures are not written in the child protection policy and therefore parents are not aware.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are able to exercise choice over which activities they wish to undertake, however, the staff are aware of children's preferences and if they avoid some areas of learning they will actively encourage the children to take part. Staff change and adapt activities to make children feel comfortable until they gain confidence.

Children see good examples of communication between their parents and their carers. Children are forming friendships and show care and concern to one another.

Children understand simple requests and listen to what the staff say. They enjoy talking about topics that interest them and often talk about their families. All children listen attentively to stories. They are happy and settled; the youngest children are treated very kindly and nurtured to help them reach their potential.

Nursery Education

Busy Builders Playgroup provides a stimulating learning environment for the children, enabling them to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, the children enjoy a higher than usual adult : child ratio which results in children receiving lots of individual attention; the key workers have a sound knowledge of their key children's abilities, helping them provide appropriate activities to further their learning. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and seize opportunities throughout the session to progress children's learning with skilful questioning. The staff are not however quite as secure in their Mathematical knowledge. Children experiment using new skills but staff provide help when appropriate. Children have lots of free choice but some children require a little more adult guidance for some activities, in particular the small world resources. Key workers adapt the activities to address children's individual learning requirements. Children's progress is regularly recorded and this information is shared with parents.

Children are interested, excited and motivated to learn, they show good levels of concentration when they are learning new skills, for example learning to catch a ball. Children suggest ideas to make the activity better and staff are responsive. They can sit still and be quiet when appropriate. Children form good relationships with adults and children and are sensitive to others. They work as part of a group, taking turns and sharing fairly. Children are very well behaved, they understand the difference between right and wrong and respect one another. Staff are quietly spoken and calm and the children reflect this behaviour.

Children like to chat with each other and the staff, they are confident to express their thoughts, likes and dislikes. They listen attentively to stories, however, they rarely use the book corner independently and the opportunities to use books to locate information are limited. They recognise repeated text and phrases and are becoming familiar with the names and sounds of letters. They recognise their own names and select their name at snack time. Children have lots of opportunities to practice

emergent writing skills in a variety of ways, for example writing and drawing in flour as well as more traditional methods like using pens, pencils and crayons.

Most children count competently and recognise different two-dimensional shapes. They recognise different colours, they appreciate and can re-create patterns, for example with beads. Children rarely make any simple calculations and staff miss opportunities to include this into the activities. Children make size and quantity comparisons and use some language for measurement, for example - big, small, tall and short, lots. They experiment to see how much they can fit into a particular space. Children enjoy puzzles and staff delight in telling their parents when they have managed to progress to a more difficult stage increasing the children's confidence. Staff rarely refer to three-dimensional shapes although some children are more than able to understand this.

Children investigate and experiment whilst they play; they particularly enjoy discovering what happens when they mix materials together, for example - adding flour or glitter to play dough. They use simple technology and learn how to make things work. They are familiar with everyday technology and use toy phones in their role play. The children undertake projects about the natural world, for example - the different seasons and changes that take place, encouraging their interest in nature. They celebrate a variety of festivals and are developing respect for their own and others cultures and beliefs. Some children will benefit from additional adult help to learn more through the small world play resources.

Children enjoy musical activities and join in singing familiar songs. They play a variety of percussion instruments and explore tone, rhythm and pitch. Children love to listen to familiar stories and become involved joining in with repeated text. They explore some ideas through role-play and small world play, for example playing with toy animals. The children are enthusiastic about art and craft activities. They have many opportunities to use and experiment with different drawing materials and are encouraged to interpret their ideas in a creative and uninhibited way. Some children have created wonderful things with construction bricks, they take photographs of their projects to provide them with a permanent record.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have access to books and toys that reflect our multi-cultural society positively. This helps children challenge stereotypes. Positive images are available of people of all races, cultures and abilities, developing children's empathic skills. Staff record children's specific needs enabling them to provide a personalised service.

Children with special needs are welcome and staff adapt activities if necessary to ensure all children take an active role. Staff welcome other agencies into the pre-school to provide additional support or advice for children with special needs, encouraging them to reach their full potential.

Children are well behaved, staff notice when they are good or kind to one another and praise and encourage desired behaviour. Children respond well to the positive

methods of behaviour management. The staff are very calm and the children reflect this behaviour resulting in a very pleasant atmosphere. Staff manage children's behaviour with sensitivity and their methods take account of the children's age and stage of development. Staff are consistent in their approach, this enables children to understand and appreciate the boundaries. Children understand what is fair and how to take turns when they play. They share nicely.

Partnership with parents is good. They are provided with good quality information about the service provided; they all receive a welcome pack and have access to a copy of the group's policies and procedures. There is a written complaints procedure that details Ofsted's telephone number but does not state their address if parents want to write.

Children's parents are welcome to visit at any time and to stay for as long as is necessary to settle their child, helping children feel secure. Staff know who will collect the child and systems are in place to ensure children never leave with strangers. Parents are invited to a meeting to look at their child's records and discuss their progress each term; they can access their child's records at any other time and often exchange information with their child's key worker verbally. This results in the staff knowing anything important to the child that is occurring at home. Parents often help at the group and they are able to become very involved with their child's education via the committee.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff display the registration certificate on the notice board for parents. The group have a new supervisor who has only been in post for a week, therefore, the new systems to record children's progress and achievements are in their infancy. The new supervisor together with the staff have identified areas they wish to improve; they have regular staff meetings to discuss how these changes will take place and agree on a course of action together. Staff understand their responsibilities and work well together as a team.

There are employment procedures in place that ensure all staff are vetted as suitable before they have unsupervised access to children.

The names of the children looked after on the premises, their hours of attendance and the names of the staff looking after them is recorded daily.

Children's names, home address and date of birth are kept confidentially along with the names, home address and telephone numbers of their parents.

Staff record any accidents that occur on the premises and parents sign to acknowledge the entry ensuring they are kept informed.

Staff record any medicinal product administered to any child on the premises,

including the date and circumstances of its administration, by whom it was administered, including medicinal products which the child is permitted to administer to themselves, together with a record of a parent's consent. These systems ensure children are not given anything inappropriately.

The pre-school has comprehensive policies and procedures that relate to the National Standards, these are currently being updated to reflect the changes the new supervisor has implemented.

Staff record any visitors to the pre-school.

Staff caring for children who are under three years old provide age appropriate activities but they intend to nominate a member of staff to deliver the Birth to 3 framework. They are considering how the younger children's progress can be monitored and recorded.

There are effective procedures in place to allow the deputy to take over when the manager is on holiday, the deputy is familiar with all the documentation and the organisation of the pre-school.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last education inspection the pre-school were requested to improve the staff's knowledge of the stepping stones and the early learning goals and how to use assessment effectively. It was noted that some four-year-olds were insufficiently challenged. The teaching support for children with special educational needs, and those learning English needed development. The programme for communication, language and literacy did not give sufficient priority to pre-reading and pre-writing skills and it was suggested that the use of the book corner and the opportunities to mark-making activities are developed.

The staff have made good progress in most of these areas; staff are more familiar with the early learning goals and the stepping stones and they record daily children's progress. A new system is in place to record children's progress that checks when their knowledge is secure. Children with special needs or who are learning English have an Individual Education Plan that includes achievable targets. Children enjoy stories and 'reading' along with staff but are still not accessing the book corner independently very often. The opportunities to access books for information are still limited. Children are provided with more mark-making opportunities whilst they play. Four year olds are generally sufficiently challenged except in some areas of Mathematics where staff knowledge is still a little insecure.

These improvements have a positive impact on the children's education and learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since April 2004 there has been one complaint relating to National Standard 6:

Safety and Standard 2: Organisation. Ofsted carried out an investigation and the provider agreed to review and amend some of their procedures to ensure they meet the National Standards. These actions were to improve how children's attendance is recorded and their procedures for taking children on outings. The provider has addressed both issues. The provider remains qualified for registration.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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):

- consider how staff will be alerted quickly if a child attempted to leave using a fire exit
- review and update the child protection policy and include procedures to be followed in the event of abuse and allegations or neglect
- consider adding Ofsted's address to the complaints procedure
- develop the range of activities for the younger children, and consider how to record their progress, for example by using Birth to three framework

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to practice making simple calculations and introduce the more able children to the correct mathematical names and the concept of three dimensional shapes
- ensure children's learning whilst they use small world play resources is adequately supported
- encourage children to use books independently and teach them the value of using books to locate information

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the

procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk