



Berry Lane Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY297245
Inspection date	05 October 2005
Inspector	Christine Pettitt
Setting Address	Scout Hut, Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 2
Telephone number	01923 445963
E-mail	pelliotthouse@aol.com
Registered person	Pamela Elliott
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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Berry Lane Pre-school has been in operation for some years but opened at the current premises in January 2005. It is located in the Mill End area of Rickmansworth operating from Victor Barton Memorial Scout Hall. The premises include a main hall and two cloakroom areas. The outside area is not currently part of the registration. The pre-school is opened five days a week during school terms. Sessions run between 09:00 and 11:30 and 13:00 until 15:30.

The pre-school cares for a maximum of 21 children aged 2 years 9 months - 5 years at any one session. There are 31 children on the roll and 26 of these receive funded nursery education. Children attend who live both in the local and wider community. Although there are currently no children attending with special needs or children for whom English is additional language, these would be provided for.

There are two full-time and three part-time staff who work with the children. Two staff have a recognised early years qualification and one is working towards a recognised qualification. The setting receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy play in an environment which is mostly hygienic. They are learning personal care and some children independently use the cloakroom area, remembering to wash their hands after using the toilet. However, the necessary toilet requisites are not always easily accessible in the cloakroom area. Children are encouraged in good hygiene practice through washing hands before their snack. They observe staff cleaning the tables before and after snack time and have their fruit in individual bowls. There is a policy relating to sickness and communicable diseases. This informs parents of expectations to minimise the risks of cross infection.

Children know about and benefit from healthy snacks. They enjoy a variety of fruits which they are able to identify. Children are learning much about healthy foods from the current theme of food. They have a choice of milk, water or fruit juice to drink at snack time. Water is not currently freely available if children are thirsty at other times. Children very much enjoy snack time as a social occasion.

Children greatly enjoy physical exercise indoors. They are pedalling tricycles well, and are able to use scooters correctly. They weave in and out of the tables, and are able to control and stop quickly to avert collisions. They strenuously bounce on the trampoline and use beams to balance. Children excitedly participate in parachute games and musical movement. They respond well to instructions from the staff in parachute games and to the adult on a music tape. Children's small movement

skills are encouraged through jigsaws, construction equipment and use of the computer mouse. This means children are able to explore and develop their physical control through indoor play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a safe environment because the premises are kept secure and most safety precautions are in place. A risk assessment for the building has been carried

out. Daily risk assessments take place informally but are not recorded. There is a safety policy.

Children's safety is maintained by the conscientious and observant staff team. Children are reminded by the staff of unsafe behaviour. Staff supervise them well, for example, when the children are using scissors. Children know they must hold on to the bar on the trampoline, the correct way to carry chairs, and how to ride tricycles safely. Children have road safety sessions when they learn how to cross roads safely. Children are reminded in story time not to speak to strangers. This means children are learning to keep themselves safe and use equipment safely.

Children's welfare is protected. A member of staff holds a current first aid certificate. There are first aid resources available. If children have accidents parents are informed. Staff are aware of the child protection policy and know who to contact if there are any concerns. Most staff either have completed or are booked on to a child protection course. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at pre-school. They arrive happy and eager to participate. New children are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive to their individual needs. They spend time reassuring the children before helping them to engage in activities with individual adult support. Children are growing in confidence and self-esteem through the encouragement of the staff team. They are motivated to learn, confidently try new activities and respond to staff questions in circle-time. They are learning days of the week and talk about the weather today and what it will be like in winter. They sing familiar songs and join in with parts of a story they know. Children behave well and respond positively to staff requests. They willingly help to tidy away activities and sit quietly at circle time. They play harmoniously together. They talk about sharing their fruit and taking turns on the computer. Younger children are benefiting from the curriculum provided for nursery education as they are involved in all aspects of the curriculum. They are becoming familiar with numbers, colours, shapes and letters. However, younger children are not always able to participate fully, as sometimes the activities are not appropriate for their ability and levels of concentration. Also some creative activities are too prescriptive and curtail their need to explore and experiment in activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They benefit from the staff's commitment to ongoing training and from their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The setting continues to develop the implementation of the Foundation Stage. They are making progress in curriculum planning and are becoming skilled at linking activities to each area of learning. However, plans do not always support less experienced staff to develop and challenge children's learning through the activities. Observations of children's abilities

take place. Progress records are completed but these are not routinely recorded. This means children's progress cannot be sufficiently monitored to identify gaps in their learning. Children respond well to staff asking children open-ended questions to gauge their understanding, but activities are not sufficiently adapted to suit the individual developmental stages of some children. Children's learning is reinforced well by staff using different resources and activities to promote each learning intention. Children respond positively to staff requests and their behaviour is managed very well. They enjoy a routine with a focus on free play and some adult-led group activities. There is a range of age-appropriate resources for free play which are planned to reinforce aspects of learning.

Children listen and respond with enjoyment to stories and singing rhymes. They are beginning to phonetically recognise letters and relate objects to the sounds. Children confidently interact in a large group. However, opportunities for children to recognise their names or the written word are few. Some children are beginning to attempt to write their names. Children are developing a sound mathematical understanding. Older children count people and objects well. They confidently count fruit in their snack bowls, can calculate if objects are taken away how many are left and recognise some numerals during calendar time. Children use mathematical language such as largest and smallest and are progressing towards identifying a variety of different shapes. Some children can match shapes and follow a pattern sequence. There are few opportunities for children to routinely develop their understanding of weight and measure.

Children are finding out about the environment through themes such as animals, food and colours. They are improving in their use of the mouse in computer skills and engage in programmes which relate to their current learning. However there are no other technology objects or programmable toys to investigate. Opportunities for children to investigate materials using their senses and their imagination in designing and making skills routinely are few. Children play imaginatively in the home corner, making staff cups of tea. They participate in creative activities, such as colouring and sticking fruit onto a fruit basket picture. Children enthusiastically join in music and movement developing rhythm by jumping, clapping, marching and responding to the adult instructions on the music tape. However, there are few opportunities for them to use their imagination in music and creative activities routinely.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave very well. They know the rules and respond well to staff requests. Children sit quietly to listen for their names at register time and behave well at snack time. They wait politely for each person on their table to finish their snack before engaging in further activities. They willingly help to clear away activities at tidy up time. Children are mostly sharing well and are learning to take turns. They talk about sharing their fruit and taking turns on the tricycles and computer. Children talk about their friends and play harmoniously together. This means that children are developing self control, taking responsibility and gaining in some aspects of independence.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Children's well-being is promoted through informal channels of communication with parents. Parents receive an introductory leaflet and a brochure which includes an overview of the basic arrangements and reference to numeracy and literacy. There is insufficient reference to the other areas of learning. Parents receive newsletters which inform parents of the current theme and other aspects of learning. Children's progress is observed, assessed and recorded. Parents receive a report containing their child's progress when they leave. Formal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress are not currently offered. Informal opportunities are minimal because parents do not routinely enter the provision. This means that parents and staff may not share in the continuing process of children's learning.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's basic individual needs are known and acknowledged through the enrolment form. There is little detail regarding the individuality of the child. Children and staff work harmoniously together and experience a happy, warm atmosphere. Children receive constant praise and encouragement from the staff in the activities. They enter the provision confidently and happily. Children who have special needs are monitored by a co-ordinator, who liaises with the parents and outside agencies. Children play with some resources which reflect positive images. Children are made aware of other cultures through themes, such as food from other countries and festivals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from a generally effective organised environment. The play area is arranged to promote safety and for children to access activities independently. The resources are displayed in a way which encourages children to use these. Children have some opportunity to learn independence skills. The informal health and safety daily assessments mean sometimes risks may be missed. The required documentation is in place. These are filed for easy access. There is a set of detailed policies as part of the operational plan. All staff have a copy of these and parents have access to them at the pre-school. New parents are talked through the policies at their child's initial introductory visit. These provide an overview for parents and staff of the practice intentions and ethos of the pre-school.

Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Practitioners have a sound knowledge and understanding of child care and the Foundation Stage. Staff work well as a team, and displayed rotas and plans enable staff to know their activity roles each week. The leader and staff are committed to improving practice, identified issues to address are dealt with promptly. Staff induction takes place informally but does not follow a procedure. This means there is not a secure process to ensure that new staff know all the relevant information. Annual appraisals for staff encourage and motivate staff to attend training. The manager sometimes role models activities to enable less experienced staff to learn

from this. Evaluation and monitoring takes place by looking at the progress records of children and by occasionally providing questionnaires for parents to complete. Overall the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to: organise snack time to expand opportunities for independence, sharing and food tasting; to ensure that various records and procedures were carried out; to ensure risk assessments were updated and children sat comfortably at the computer.

Children's independence skills are encouraged, children collecting fruit and cups for each table at snack time. Some children were calculating how many cups they needed for their table. Children tasted fruit and talked about the taste, responding to questions such as, 'is it sharp'? Children are encouraged to taste the fruits but share these if there are some fruits they do not like.

The various records and procedures referred to emergency medical treatment, records relating to the register, accident and fire log records and child protection and medication procedures. These issues have been addressed.

An annual risk assessment is formally carried out and recorded, but daily informal risk assessments are not recorded, consequently aspects of health and safety are missed. Children are sitting comfortably at eye-level height to the computer screen.

The recommendations for the nursery education were: to expand opportunities for children to practise skills through play; to improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to support planning and implementation of activities and the routine; to make effective use of time, resources and accommodation to inspire children and encourage them to initiate their own learning.

Improvements in these areas are noticeable, particularly through the growing knowledge and understanding of the staff team. The curriculum offers a variety of play activities during free play. These cover some of the learning areas and different types of play. Staff use the free play activities to find out from children what they know and to further the children's knowledge and understanding. Resources are provided to reinforce the current learning intentions. Staff training in the Foundation Stage and developing curriculum plans have extended their knowledge and understanding and had impact on practice with the children. This is particularly evident in the children's grasp of numeracy where it is evident that staff are reinforcing numbers through varied means and in different activities in the routine, using resources, visual aids and different methods well to promote a sound concept of numbers.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

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 robust systems are in place so that health and safety issues are addressed routinely and new staff induction procedures are consistent
- ensure children have access to fresh drinking water at all times
- provide opportunities for all children to extend their imagination in all aspects of creativity
- improve the outcomes for younger children by using an approach in line with 'Birth to three matters.'

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):

- encourage parents to share initial information about their child and ensure they are well informed about their child's progress and learning
- ensure curriculum plans and the routine include all aspects of the early learning goals and that regular assessment is used to build on children's progress providing challenge according to their individual stage of development.

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