



Blackberry Lane Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY300951
Inspection date	05 December 2005
Inspector	Sue Williams
Setting Address	Blackberry Lane Pre-School, Edinburgh Close, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 8HF
Telephone number	01983 298344
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Registered person	Blackberry Lane Pre-School Ltd
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 outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Blackberry Lane Pre school opened in December 1978 and operates in a separate building within the grounds of Cowes Primary School in Cowes on the Isle of Wight. The setting is a purpose built nursery consisting of 4 rooms. There are 2 rooms which are used for play and work with the children. There is a kitchen, store, office and secure outside play area, some of which is partially covered. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09:00 until 15:00 during term time and offers sessions from 09:00

until 11:45 and from 12:30 until 15:00. The setting opens for 2 weeks during the summer holiday and at Easter each Tuesday and Thursday from 09:30 until 15:00.

A maximum of 40 children may attend at any one time.

There are currently 62 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these, 44 receive funding for nursery education. Children generally come from the local community. The nursery currently supports a number of children with special educational needs, and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 12 staff. There are 6 staff, including the managers, who hold appropriate early years qualifications. There are 4 staff are working toward a qualification and ongoing training is pursued. The setting receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from becoming ill because the staff take strategic measures to limit the spread of infection and disease. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene through discussion and daily routines. They are actively encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times, talking with staff about what they are doing and why. Before snack times, after a morning's play, children are despatched to wash their hands in a fun way, with staff singing the child's first name " go and wash your hands" to the tune of 'here we go round the mulberry bush.' They use clean toilets which staff maintain throughout the day. Children are learning to flush for themselves and if they have a cough or cold they either ask or help themselves to tissues. Pull ups are available for children who are almost toilet trained. They are also learning to manage for themselves with help from staff. Spare clean clothing is always available should there be any accidents. Children are further protected from the spread of infection and disease because sick children are not accepted in the setting. The written policy explains to parents the importance of the 48 hour exclusion of children who have tummy upsets. Written consent is sought for emergency treatment and procedures are in place for the administration of medication. Staff hold first aid qualifications which are monitored and updated. Children take part in regular physical play, using the outside play areas for more robust play, or during inclement weather they enjoy vigorous musical movement indoors.

Children learn about healthy eating. Packed lunches are brought in and safely stored. Children are encouraged to eat their savouries first when staff sit with them for their lunch. Healthy eating is promoted at snack times where children are offered fruit, milk or water. Water is also available throughout the day from a water cooler from which children help themselves. Children discuss their lunch with each other and staff; they are learning through projects and discussion about healthy eating and also about foods which children of other cultures enjoy. Meals are a happy social time where

staff present good role models. Children learn good manners and simple courtesies by example. Dietary needs are recorded and addressed, and nothing containing nuts is allowed to be brought into the setting, to safeguard any children with severe nut allergies. Staff maintain a white board in the food preparation area each day, notating specific dietary needs any child may have. Reminders to apply creams for such things as eczema or medication is also at a glance for staff. The board is in the kitchen and inaccessible to parents and visitors, in order to maintain confidentiality. If a packed lunch is forgotten staff will always make sure children receive a meal. All children have a restful time immediately after their lunch.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are welcomed into a visually stimulating environment where they have space to move around and play freely. They use two rooms, the largest of which has a play deck and a secure outside play area some of which is partially covered. There are tarmac, grass and Astro turf areas with some shade. A vestibule area near the nursery entrance houses more resources, and toilet facilities are sited adjacent to the main play room. The kitchen area is gated and inaccessible to children; there is an office and separate toilet for staff.

Children use safe resources which are of excellent quality and play value. For example, exciting construction apparatus is plentiful ensuring many children can engage in building together. Equipment and resources are chosen with care to make them exciting and interesting for the children. Resources are stimulating and geared to promote children's development toward the early learning goals. They are clearly labelled and well presented. Children have all the facilities they need to be comfortable. Space is ample, there are tables and chairs, soft seating, bean bags and cushions; the underneath of the play deck can be made into a quiet area at any time.

Children are secure and well supervised because the staff take rigorous measures to minimise potential accidents within the setting and on outings. Staff are vigilant about their risk assessment of the setting throughout the day. For example, toilets are regularly checked for spills to make sure children do not slip and the floor of the setting is checked for obstructions. Outside areas are scrutinised to ensure there are no hazards and two staff monitor the arrival and departure of children each day. Parents and visitors ring to gain access through a double locked door and all visitors sign their arrival and departure. Children are never released to unauthorised persons. Harmful substances and medication are safely stored. Fire safety procedures are known by all staff. Drill is practised with the school and is currently under review. Managers have recently attended a training programme about fire safety and all new training is shared with the entire staff team. Accidents and incidents are recorded and countersigned by parents; this documentation is reviewed weekly.

Children are protected from abuse because the staff have a good working knowledge of possible signs. They understand their duty as professional child carers to be vigilant and safeguard children. There is a named child protection officer within the

setting for consultation. Staff also are aware of the whistle blowing and referral procedure and will take any action necessary to promote and maintain the safety and welfare of children in their care. The entire team work within the bounds of professional confidentiality. Parents are made aware of staff's duty to safeguard children and receive a policy which includes a statement of intent.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are happy and settled. They are interested, excited and motivated to learn. Their independence is encouraged throughout the setting. For example, they select freely from an extensive and innovative range of activities and resources which are clearly labelled and easily accessed. Children make decisions and develop their own ideas using the excellent resources, materials and apparatus available. For example two boys opt for a fort and castle. Alongside, two girls are similarly engaged with the construction which they selected. Staff are skilled at balancing whether to extend the play or allow it to remain child led. The children interact well with the staff, confident to make their needs known to a team of adults who clearly show genuine affection toward the children.

The setting is beginning to include the Birth to three matters framework in a more focused way since the manager and some staff have attended recent training. Younger children benefit from the staff's enthusiasm and ability to 'bring activities alive' as a result of the workshops. For example during circle and small group time, stories and singing, the children interact more. They actively contribute to stories and songs by taking part, making sounds, using puppets together with other props and resources that go with the story. These are now carefully planned prior to delivery. Information and guidance for staff and parents about the Birth to three framework is displayed alongside the list of early learning goals and daily plans which now incorporate Birth to three in its own right. More staff are enrolled on the training and the new knowledge learned is delivered to staff in the setting when they meet as a team.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

Most staff's excellent knowledge of the stepping stones and early learning goals means that they provide an extensive range of exciting and innovative activities that stimulate children's curiosity and motivation to learn. Other and very new staff have varying degrees of training and experience. New staff are settling in, getting to know the children, parents and daily routines and continuing to update their knowledge. The curriculum is well balanced and covers all areas of learning. It is easily tracked to children's individual files thus ensuring all children achieve progression. The delivery of the programme is excellent. Staff encourage children to think about what they are trying to achieve. They ask open ended questions and give children time to consider their answers before responding, which in turn develops children's self esteem and confidence. Staff do not miss opportunities to maximise incidental learning situations throughout the day. For example, they offer opportunities for sequencing and the

difficult concept of time when discussing the days of the week, and counting how many children at story time or registration. Staff are very skilled at extending children's own ideas and thought patterns through conversation and by participating wholly with the discussion or activities. Children benefit from the room leaders' and key workers' clear understanding of the developmental needs of the children. Planning and delivery includes differentiation to meet the ages, stages and individual needs of all children attending the sessions. Careful monitoring and recording of children's progress, their preferences and dislikes informs future planning. Staff work together sharing observations of children's progress and their identification of gaps in children's learning and comprehension. Together they plan and devise a challenging and stimulating curriculum to ensure all children continue to make steady progress toward the early learning goals.

Children are learning to concentrate. For example, a member of staff at the jigsaw puzzle table discusses the seven pictures with the children, giving them time to choose and twiddle pieces of puzzle until it is in the correct position and praising them when it is completed. Puzzles are of varying degrees showing positive images of diversity, nativities and Christmas in the wider world. Jigsaws range from simple insets to those with more pieces. Children have an awareness and growing respect for beliefs and cultures. For example, they celebrate Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year and are performing a nativity for the parents. Children take turns, whether working in groups or waiting for a favourite wheeled toy during outside play time. They listen carefully and follow simple directions. For example, they pour their own drinks at snack time. A child's beaker is very full. Instead of a staff member taking over the situation, the child listened to the member of staff who suggested walking steadily and sitting down. Consequentially the child emerged with a sense of self-esteem due to sensitive handling by skilful staff. Children are learning about self care and self discipline. They know they need to wear their splash suits and wellies for outdoor play during inclement weather to keep dry. They are considerate, manage the toilet and hand washing by themselves according to ability. They are very adept at steering wheeled toys to avoid collisions on the tarmac outdoors or bumping each other's backs when using the slide. Children see excellent role models, as staff demonstrate care and courtesy on all levels at all times. The children emulate this, showing concern and consideration if children have additional needs or are anxious about something. Children know the rules which are posted on the nursery walls. For example, these include 'give cuddles', 'be wonderful', 'be friends and nice to each other', 'put coats on pegs and not on the floor', 'flush the toilets', 'help tidy up' and 'say please and thank you'.

Children's spoken language is developing very well. They are able to clearly explain their ideas, express feelings and make their needs known. Children with English as an additional language or speech and language difficulty are well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and staff within the setting who work closely together with parents and other professionals. The children make their needs known by gestures, pictorial cues and en face communication with well informed staff who stoop to be at the children's eye level. Children respond to stories, actively joining in using props and thinking about sequence as in 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story and 'Mrs. Honey's Hat'. They love using, and joining in with, stories from the 'story sack'. They actively interact, often thinking of songs or rhymes they know which are

linked to carefully selected 'secret items' they may feel and select from the sack. Children use a method of phonics to support their language and to link sounds to letters. They answer their name with a 'Ho Ho Ho ' at registration just for Christmas fun, and because it is something Santa does as he is a very jolly man. They talk about 'A' ants up my arm, 'T' for the sound of the tennis ball and 'C' for castanets. They are learning that print carries meaning and are writing letters to Father Christmas. They also write and invite their teddies to a picnic and show delight when the postman delivers their letters to their homes. All children are included in the activity according to their individual stage of development. For example, some children are copying a simple draft forming their letters correctly, others are mark making and the very young are using a stamp and ink pad. Children put the letters into envelopes to post. Mark making and handwriting is fostered, not only in role-play such as 'cafés' or 'offices', but in a variety of innovative, exciting and imaginative ways. For example, children are using dance as a method of writing. They make sweeping hand and arm movements as if they were swimming vertically as the lava erupts from the volcano and softer movements as their hands spin from their wrists as the lava cascades over the side of the volcano. These large coordinative movements transfer to huge sheets of paper with children using markers in each hand. Later this is refined into smaller movements on smaller paper with pencils and crayons. Children are beginning to use language for thinking, communication and linking sounds and letters. They are making excellent progress toward writing their own names, as they label their work with clearly formed letters, and to understand that print reads from left to right and carries meaning.

Children count with growing confidence. Staff use every opportunity to promote incidental mathematics in everyday situations to reinforce numbers, such as counting beakers and numbers of children, looking at shapes and position when using the climbing frame and slide. They sort and categorise when sorting the dolls in the dolls house, the rooms they may fit into or whether the car is too big to fit in the garage. Excellent resources promote children's concept of numbers. A set of numbered elephants which join together are used in a variety of ways. ' Are there more or less elephants?' One elephant has his number worn and rubbed off. Children think, calculate and determine what the missing number may be. They solve problems and extend calculation by weighing and sequencing mathematical 3D dogs of differing size colour and weight, making the scales balance or go up or down; 'not enough, too many, too light, too heavy, more blue, orange or red dogs, more large, big, little, small, medium, middle size dogs, how many left, how many more do we need?' Children are learning important mathematical language and concepts in small focused groups and through incidental learning. They solve problems, count and say numbers and calculate as opportunities present during activities and situations. For example at circle time, Monday morning, the advent calendar has not been opened since Friday. Staff ask, 'how many windows on the calendar, how many opened already, how many can we open today?' Staff are very skilled at knowing when to use an opportunity to extend children's learning and when the interest, joy or aesthetic beauty of something may be lost through too much bombardment.

Children have many opportunities to develop an understanding of the world around them and the wider world. They explore and investigate using all their senses. For example, children taste different cooked apples, they make Christmas cakes stirring

and tasting as they chatter. Discussions about likes and dislikes evokes a child's memory of not liking the ducks which a parent brought into the setting. Children have exciting fun in the dark bear cave area made under the play deck. They use torches, causing great excitement and are introduced to new vocabulary such as scary, dark and light. They compare the dark with light incorporating festivals within activities, such as Diwali. Children investigate real X-rays from the hospital. They are intrigued by the skeleton photograph and later make skeletal pictures using black paper, drinking straws and/or chalk, talking about bones and feeling them in their bodies. Children discover how things work and use magnets. They grow hyacinth bulbs in glasses and watch the roots, knowing the same is happening under the narcissus bulbs they have planted in compost. A member of staff discovers the sink in the messy play area is clogged with materials. She finds a plunger and discusses with a child what may have caused it, giving him time to think about what may have happened, and explains how the plunger will force air down the plughole to remove the blockage. The child is intrigued, helps and is delighted by the success of the water clearing away. Staff use incidental learning opportunities such as this throughout the day. Children enjoy craft activities. They design and build, make collages, three-dimensional models, such as lanterns and spiders and use a variety of tools and materials. The children know about and use everyday technology from programmable toddler toys to the nursery computer and audio story equipment with headphones. They use Adacta Lego for construction which includes batteries to make working models. Children talk about time during circle time. They remember past activities and events; they talk about the weather board and what it was like yesterday. They discuss and measure how much they have grown. Children remember the Tsunami and talk about it. They remember the patterns they drew on their hands; a child remembers that they were called Mendhi patterns. Children celebrate birthdays and are celebrating a member of staff's birthday. They talk about the Advent calendar and refer to the picture akin to the nativity play they are presenting to the parents.

Children move with control and coordination. They have good spatial awareness. They travel around, through, under and over when using equipment, the play deck and wheeled toys. They 'paint' walls with huge brushes using life size paint pots and are able to thread small beads with growing confidence and dexterity. Children enjoy music and dance. For example, they dance to 'Dance in Your Pants' and 'The Supermarket' audio tapes, listening and moving with the narrative and the music, reaching up for the cornflakes and down into the freezer. They 'lift' heavy bags of potatoes and 'put' things into their imaginary trolleys. Imaginative play and stories are very much enjoyed with uninhibited enthusiasm. Children make horrible faces like the troll, as they interact with the story of The Three Billy Goats Gruff. New experiences extend children's ideas, thoughts and feelings. Photographic evidence shows children's response to the pumpkin pulp which they emptied into a large play tray and squished with their hands, examining the fibres and seeds after making a Jack 'o' Lantern. Copious amounts of shaving foam is spread over two tables with plastic saws available. Children make patterns, sculpt steeples, shapes and make swirly patterns, delighted with the feel and properties of the foam. They engage in discussions with their key worker chatting happily and responding in a variety of ways to what they feel and see. Children use a wide range of materials to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings as they play imaginatively and creatively.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children value diversity because the staff have a clear understanding of equal opportunities and uphold the written policies in practice. Children feel valued because they are treated as individuals, therefore children's spiritual moral social and cultural development is fostered. Resources, such as small world dolls with callipers, wheelchairs and walking sticks, posters, every day practice and discussion all promote positive images of a diverse world. The team support children for whom English is not a first language using visual clues, books and learning key words. All children are included in all activities within the setting. The nursery employs a special needs co-ordinator who takes her role very seriously. She supports children who may have additional needs. She adapts equipment to meet the individual needs of each child. She pursues ongoing training and liaises with staff, parents and other professionals to maximise children's potential and development at all times.

Children are considerate. They see excellent role models in the staff each day. Children are beginning to, or know, the rules of the setting. They are polite and courteous and are developing a sense of what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Younger children observe and listen, they too are beginning to understand that rules are about staying safe and caring for one another. Praise is awarded for good behaviour, achievement, such as stopping during music sessions when the music stops and being kind to one another.

Parents are valued and welcomed into the setting. Staff liaise with parents in a comfortable manner yet remaining professional at all times. If parents have a complaint, the regulators contact number is clearly displayed although the setting has yet to set up an in house complaints procedure showing parents how complaints are recorded and progressed. Partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's needs are met through the meticulous and methodical sharing of information with parents about their children. For example, after registration parents receive a comprehensive and well presented pack of information about the setting, which also includes information about the six areas of learning, the local authority accreditation award and former inspection reports. Parents complete a simple profile about their child which enables staff to settle children, build their confidence and plan suitable activities to promote their development and learning. Parents know who their child's key worker is and feel comfortable talking to all members of staff who know all the children very well. The setting offers two free play sessions before the official start. Children's needs and development are further enhanced because the nursery presents a regular 'activities at home' sheet for parents to become involved with their children's education. Parents are invited to in-service training where it is appropriate; they are also invited to contribute to questionnaires with suggestions for improving practice in the nursery. Suggestions are added to the meeting agendas and discussed among the team. An outside seating area has also been made for parents. The six areas of learning are displayed in the setting and an exchange message book is used on a daily basis where necessary. The staff work within the bounds of professional confidentiality. Parents receive regular newsletters, information, may see their child's progress file at any time and arrange to speak with their child's key worker. Parents can be as involved with their child's education as they want to be.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff are suitably qualified, ongoing training is encouraged and fostered. Very new staff, only one or two days into employment, already know all the safety procedures and are pursuing further training. They are mentored by established staff and key workers in the setting, who support and empower them. Daily routines are very well organised and run smoothly. Plans are flexible and are changed if something of great interest occurs which will benefit the children or contribute to their learning. Children move freely from one activity to another. Systematic planning and forward thinking means children never have to wait for an activity to start and that they are fully occupied throughout their day, which has a positive effect on behaviour. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Ratios are maintained at all times and staff are deployed effectively to provide maximum support and vigilant supervision of the children. The daily registers are up to date and show which staff are present each day, as some work on a part time basis. Clear procedures are in place to ensure all adults in the setting are checked; managers are starting to use the new legislative procedures when employing new staff. New staff complete a comprehensive induction programme with mentor support to maintain the children's safety, education and welfare. Children are further safeguarded because all policies and most procedures are implemented effectively. Most of the required paperwork and documentation is maintained to a very high professional standard and is available for inspection at any time.

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. The chairperson and managers have a clear vision and sense of purpose about what they are working towards in the setting. The managers have an active role as key workers in the nursery, providing support and guidance, monitoring staff's progress through observations and appraisals which in turn identify training needs. The chairperson conducts appraisals for the managers and spends time in the setting observing staff, the grouping of children, whether the layout of the rooms can be improved and considering where training could improve practice even more. She consults with the managers on a regular basis. The entire team meet once a year to plan the curriculum for the year, each member confident to make valued contributions. Key staff meet each week to review and evaluate activities and routines to make sure objectives and outcomes are met and children achieve progression. Staff work closely together; they know the children, their individual needs and abilities very well. They adapt activities and resources as necessary to improve the overall programme. Ongoing training is encouraged and children benefit from this. For example, the setting effectively promotes healthy eating. However, as a result of a staff member attending training, plans are in place to extend healthy eating even further by offering children slow burning nutritious options such as porridge, toast and involving children in the preparation of snacks such as cutting fruit. The cohesive and dynamic team present a curriculum for children which is inspiring, exciting, wide ranging and successful in promoting children's education and development toward the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider was asked to obtain from parents and carers written consent for emergency treatment and to work with the children in smaller groups. Written consent is now included within the registration procedure and children are benefiting from working in smaller groups which allows everyone to have a voice and is less daunting for small children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. 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 outstanding.

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):

- devise a system to record and progress complaints which are shared with parents.

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