



## **Busy Fingers Pre-School**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	221725
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 June 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Emma Bright
<b>Setting Address</b>	Main Street, Little Downham, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2ST
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<b>Registered person</b>	Busy Fingers Pre-school
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Busy Fingers Pre-School is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children attending the setting. It opened in 1995 and operates from purpose-built building, within the grounds of Downham Feoffees Primary School. It is situated in the village of Little Downham, close to Ely. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 to 11:45, Monday to Friday and

from 13:00 to 15:00 Monday, Wednesday and Friday. All children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 59 children aged from three to under five years on roll. Of these, 44 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The pre-school currently supports a small number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The pre-school employs eight staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are currently working towards a qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Children thrive because excellent procedures and routines are in place to ensure that they stay healthy and protected from infection. Practitioners act as very good role models, washing their own hands and wiping down tables with anti-bacterial spray before serving food to help children to remain healthy. Children understand personal hygiene, observing that their 'hands are dirty' and washing their hands unprompted. They explain clearly that playdough should not be eaten 'because it would make you get a poorly tummy'. In addition, sunhats are provided for children to wear outdoors. They consistently take a hat and put it on before going outside, explaining that 'it stops the sun from getting on my head'.

Children are very well cared for if they become unwell or in the event of an accident because clear information is gathered from parents and excellent records are in place to make sure that appropriate care is given. Accurate details of children's allergies and medical needs are recorded and all practitioners are aware so that they can act swiftly in an emergency. Thorough recording systems ensure that parents are informed of any accidents their child sustains whilst at the setting. The setting's sickness policy is thorough and clear notices on display inform parents of any current illness so that they know what to look for if their child becomes unwell. This helps to prevent the spread of cross-infection.

Children learn to lead a healthy lifestyle through everyday, meaningful experiences. Practitioners have an excellent knowledge of childhood health and provide an exciting range of activities for children to experience. For example, children grow vegetables in tubs, they tend the plants and help to harvest them for use in cooking activities. Children thoroughly enjoy the social aspect with their peers and adults during snack time, which is provided on a 'rolling' basis so that they can choose when they want to eat. This allows them to continue their activities and enhances the gentle flow of the session. Children tuck in enthusiastically to a range of healthy snacks, such as fresh fruit or cheese and crackers, and water or milk. They talk to each other with understanding about foods that 'are good for you'; they know what food is good for them and explain that cheese 'gives you muscles'. Children help themselves to water from a water cooler whenever they need it so that they are well

hydrated.

All children benefit from the strong emphasis on physical development and outdoor play, which ensures they receive plenty of exercise to promote their growth and development. Children move independently between indoors and outdoors throughout the session, accessing the wide range of activities provided to develop their growing physical skills. For example, they crawl through tunnels, competently climb large apparatus and speed along on scooters and tricycles with confidence. Well chosen resources and the very good adult support means that activities provide physical challenges to all children. Many 'indoor' activities are available in the spacious outdoor area. For example, children expertly use small hammers and nails at the wood work bench to develop their small physical skills.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

Children learn and play in a clean, bright and well maintained building, and great emphasis is given to making sure that the environment is welcoming for children, which enhances their development. Children move freely between indoors and outdoors, accessing equipment and activities independently to follow their own interests. The whole environment is expertly set out before children arrive each day with a wealth of exciting and challenging activities, which stimulate children's interest. Areas are clearly defined, such as a computer station, book corner and wet or messy play. Children understand the purpose of the quiet room, describing it as a place where they go 'when you want to be quiet'.

All children have access to an extensive range of good quality, accessible and safe equipment. This ensures that they engage in purposeful activity and safely choose items themselves to promote their independence. Resources have been carefully chosen to support children's play and these are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they remain in safe and in good condition. The low-level accessible storage of equipment significantly enhances the children's independence and development.

Children's safety is greatly enhanced by very good security procedures to restrict access to the setting and prevent them from leaving the premises unaccompanied. Practitioner's are particularly vigilant in their supervision of children and consistently check that sufficient adults are present, both indoor and outdoors. Children learn about keeping safe as practitioners provide simple, but clear explanations to help them think about why, for example, they should sit carefully on their chairs. Children know that this is because they could fall off and hurt themselves. In addition, activities are provided that help children to learn about safety through practical experiences, such as wearing safety goggles when using small hammers to break up blocks of ice. This helps children develop their understanding of hazards and to take responsibility for themselves.

Children are very well protected and kept safe from harm as all practitioners have an excellent understanding of their role in child protection. They regularly access training to ensure their knowledge is up-to-date and in line with local procedures, which

means that children's welfare is safeguarded. Parents are well informed about the setting's responsibilities through a clear and detailed policy, which is included in the parents' brochure.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

All children arrive happy and with eager anticipation at the setting. They relish their time in the highly stimulating and very well resourced environment, which puts them first. Children play a dynamic part in the setting; they actively pursue their own interests and are highly motivated by the rich learning experiences on offer. Children are extremely confident and independent as they busy themselves, becoming absorbed in their self-chosen activity. For example, children sustain attention for long periods of time as they explore playdough. They expertly manipulate it into faces, giving descriptions as they add features and they make 'smiley' mouths because their faces are happy.

Children play effectively on their own or with others and form strong friendships with their peers. Close and caring relationships throughout the setting increase children's sense of trust and help them to develop a strong sense of self. Practitioners are sensitive to children's needs and consistently interact with them at a very high level to extend their learning and play; they listen to children's comments and ideas, treating what children say with respect. This contributes significantly to the children's sense of belonging and continuously develops their confidence and self-esteem.

Practitioners have an excellent understanding of child development and how children learn. They use the 'Birth to three matters' framework as a reference tool to create an environment where children thrive. For example, younger children eagerly participate in threading activities because they use larger beads to make necklaces and this enhances their confidence and supports their growing skills.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children benefit significantly from the practitioners' excellent knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage. Exceptional planning for children's play and learning ensures that there is always something new to capture their imagination. A flexible approach to this planning means that an excellent balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Practitioners are perceptive to children's interests and make effective use of questions to challenge their thinking and language skills. Children respond positively to this challenge and enjoy demonstrating what they know with great enthusiasm. Highly effective systems to observe, monitor and record children's achievements ensure that practitioners build on what children already know and they plan experiences that help children take the next step in their learning. As a result children are making outstanding progress towards the early learning goals.

Children are highly independent and the free-flow of stimulating activities, both indoor and outdoors enables them to share responsibility for their learning. They demonstrate great pride in their achievements for example, they persevere to finish a

task and announce 'Look. It worked' when they finish. Children's behaviour is exemplary and they competently take turns, such as when negotiating for resources and they readily share them with others. Children speak confidently and clearly in large and small groups, showing the ability to recall events. They display great curiosity and confidently initiate conversations with other adults to find out who they are and what they are doing. Children's early writing skills are developing extremely well and they all use marks readily to represent their ideas in a range of stimulating activities, such as painting with water and making marks in the role play area. Older children are adept at writing their own names, either on paper with pens or on the computer using the mouse to form recognisable letters. Children delight in listening to stories and enjoy choosing books for themselves, which they handle with care and respect.

Children have a well developed understanding of numbers, counting and calculation. They use number in a meaningful context and understand that numbers represent sets of objects and written numerals. For example, they count seven 'men' and correctly identify the corresponding numeral from a different activity. Children know how old they are and demonstrate on their fingers how old they will be next. They use mathematical language to describe volume and measure as they fill up their containers with water or record how tall they are on the height chart. Children find out about living things as they grow and tend their plants in the outdoor area. They use magnifying glasses to observe the changes in the plants and they know the plants need water to help them grow. Children competently use the computer and have excellent opportunities to develop their IT skills, such as drawing or writing and printing off the results. In addition children use everyday technology in their play, such as telephones, typewriters and a digital camera.

Children enjoy talking about events in their own lives that are important to them and readily share them. They talk about their feelings, expressing themselves competently and describe when they feel sad, they talk to their teacher and she makes them feel better. Children thoroughly enjoy the excellent range of creative activities. They animatedly paint their faces with a range of colours, using a mirror to carefully apply the paint. Some children clearly have a specific design in mind, painting their faces white with a red cross and excitedly announce when they have finished 'I'm England'. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's self-expression, they freely produce excellent drawings, pictures and models to represent their ideas. They express their imagination by re-enacting familiar scenarios in the role play area, such as quietly and carefully laying spoons and forks on the table or typing a letter in the 'travel agents'. Children move with enjoyment, singing and dancing as they re-enact a Brazilian carnival and tap their sticks along to the rhythm of the music from Brazil.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Practitioners respect and value children's individuality and work very well with parents to ensure that the needs of all children are met. Children benefit from the setting's strong emphasis of working with parents and carers. Thorough settling in

procedures that are based around their individual needs helps to support children in the transition between home and the setting. Parents receive clear and detailed information about the setting so they know about activities and events, and they have daily opportunities to discuss their child with practitioners. This helps children to settle quickly and ensures their individual needs continue to be met. All policies and procedures are in place to share information with parents and carers. Although the system for recording complaints is in place, it is not appropriately available for parents on request.

Children with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from experienced and caring one-to-one support, which enables them to participate at an appropriate level. Clear records are kept of children's progress and practitioners actively work with parents, carers and other agencies to support the children's needs, which ensures that they are fully included within the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. All children have extensive opportunities to learn about themselves, each other and the world around them through a range of very well planned activities. The excellent range of resources that positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community supports their play. In their everyday play children use resources such as books, musical instruments, dressing up outfits and listen to different types of music, which broadens their awareness of diversity throughout the world. For example, they listen and dance to music from Brazil, cook and taste food from China and gain awareness of different cultures and beliefs through the celebration of festivals.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They interact confidently with adults and their peers, learning to consider the needs of others and to work together co-operatively, for example, as they help each other to tidy up. Practitioners set clear boundaries and have high expectations for all children in the setting, which helps them learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. For example, they use a sand timer and understand that this is to help them know when it is someone else's turn. Practitioners use positive language to reinforce the rules of the setting and as a result children work harmoniously together.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is outstanding. Practitioners actively seek parents' views about their child's needs, interests and achievements before the child starts, and on a regular basis throughout their time there. This contributes significantly to children's well-being in the setting. Children's records are available to parent's on a regular basis and they meet regularly with their child's key worker to ensure that they know how their child is progressing and developing. Staff are keen to involve parents in their children's learning. They have set up a book lending scheme and provide parents with 'activities at home' sheets. These inform parents of their current topics and suggests activities that they could enjoy at home with their children to support their learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from an exceptionally well prepared environment that promotes

positive outcomes for all children and enables them to make decisions and pursue their own interests. This contributes significantly to their enjoyment at the setting. Children are extremely happy and confident because practitioners develop warm and caring relationships with them. For example, an effective key worker system ensures that all children's needs are clearly known and met. Rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that practitioners are suitable and have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children. A comprehensive induction programme makes sure that the whole team are secure in their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities with particular regard to child protection and maintaining children's safety.

The high adult:child ratio enables the setting to work flexibly to support children's learning in small groups and on an individual basis, when appropriate. Practitioners work exceptionally well together and demonstrate great enthusiasm for creating a learning environment that stimulates, excites and challenges children of all ages. Policies, records and procedures are clear and comprehensive, clearly underpinning the outstanding practice in promoting positive outcomes for children. Practitioner's knowledge and understanding of these documents clearly contributes to their implementation to ensure that children are safe and well cared for. There is a high emphasis on professional development and practitioners regularly attend a range of training opportunities. As a result children benefit from practices which are in line with current ideas and legislation.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The Lead Practitioner has a clear vision of high quality childcare and education and manages the provision exceptionally well. She has a clear understanding of her role in monitoring and evaluating the provision of the nursery education. All practitioners demonstrate a real commitment to continuously developing the setting's practice to ensure that all children have access to high quality learning experiences.

Robust formal and informal systems are in place to look at the effectiveness of the provision. Through this evaluative and reflective practice they strive for further improvement to continue to enhance children's experiences at the setting. The practice which takes place within this pre-school is worth disseminating beyond this setting. Overall, children's needs are met.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to ensure all policies are available to parents and improve the recruitment procedure. All policies and procedures are available to parents, both in full and abbreviated versions. They can also request them in different formats, such as Braille or other languages. This means that parents are fully informed about the setting. Rigorous recruitment procedures are now in place and this ensures that applicants are suitable to work with children.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to further develop the use of labelling on children's resources. A wealth of labels are prominently displayed throughout the setting. When appropriate, labels feature children's home language, Makaton signs or symbols and this enhances all children's understanding that words carry meaning.



### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 April 2004. 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):

- develop the complaints log so that records of complaints can be shared appropriately 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)