



Blue Bell Hill Play School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY294034
Inspection date	16 January 2006
Inspector	Linda Patricia Coccia
Setting Address	Bluebell Hill Hall, Robin Hood Lane, Blue Bell Hill, Chatham, Kent, ME5 9QR
Telephone number	07731 503227
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Registered person	Beverly Dawne Watkins
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?

Bluebell Hill Play School opened in 2004 and operates from one room in the village hall. It is situated in the village of Bluebell Hill, Kent. A maximum of 22 children may attend the play school at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 for 33 weeks of the year.

There are currently 19 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 11 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment

area. The nursery currently monitors some children with special educational needs.

The nursery employs four members of staff. All four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. A volunteer staff member is working towards an early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children participate in effective personal hygiene procedures. They wash their hands with antibacterial soap after using the toilet or playing with messy play activities. They are regularly reminded why they need to wash their hands. Children are also kept safe from the spread of infection by a well written sick child policy and gentle reminders from staff about putting a hand over their mouth when coughing. Children practise good hygiene procedures.

The children are offered a good variety of activities involving food and healthy eating. They have made their own vegetable soup and bread, have tasted lots of different fruit and made pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. Although permission is given by parents for these activities it is not in writing. Each day parents provide snack boxes for their own children, many of which now contain healthy snacks and drinks. The group gives high priority to ensuring that children's individual dietary needs are catered for.

Children use a good range of energetic, physical activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They develop self confidence in their physical skills as they use a wide range of indoor toys and equipment, from climbing frames and parachute games to dancing to music or skipping with hoops. They are aware of safety issues surrounding the use of large equipment, for example they know they must not jump off from the top of the climbing frame and keeping balls low down so as not to hurt each other. Children greatly enjoy their physical play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children play within an organised, safe environment and can move freely between the rooms. The staff carry out daily written risk assessments on the premises prior to the children entering the building. The children use clean, well maintained toys which are suitable for their age group. Due to restricted storage facilities children are unable to have free access to all toys and activities but they can help themselves to the generous range of toys selected by staff each morning. Staff ask children during each session what they would like out to play with. Children are encouraged to look after their toys, help clean them and help tidy away at the end of the session. Children learn respect for their equipment.

Children benefit from a good range of safety measures, for example, the use of

socket covers, fire extinguishers and vigilant staff in the outdoor play area. They develop a good awareness of safety through practicing emergency evacuations every six weeks and discussing the reasons for this with staff. Sensitive reminders, such as how to safely carry a pair of scissors or to avoid knocking into each other with ride on toys, increase children's awareness of everyday safety in the setting.

There are well written, clear, concise procedures for dealing with child protection issues which help keep the children safe. The written information is shared with parents which ensures they have a good understanding of the group's role in protecting children. Children's well being is promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The children enjoy their time at the nursery and the company of the staff. Children smile, laugh and interact very well with staff, voluntarily offering them hugs and cuddles. The walls are decorated with children's work as well as brightly coloured information posters, all helping to make the atmosphere homely, friendly and welcoming. Photographs of children enjoying activities are made available, to children and their parents. Children settle easily each morning.

There are lots of appropriate and interesting toys for the children to play with, which cover the appropriate areas of development. Staff have used 'Birth to three matters framework' to assess the needs of the under 3's. There is a well equipped home corner, creative tables where children can draw and paint with a variety of different mediums. There are also quiet areas where the children can relax and read books. Children are able to choose their own activities and utilise them well, for example a number of children used some large cardboard boxes to take a train trip to the beach and packed it with what they thought they would need for the day, such as play food and dollies. The relaxed atmosphere allows children to develop at their own pace.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are interested in and enjoy, the interesting range of activities offered which support all areas of their learning. All children are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They are able to talk animatedly about the activities they use and the toys they like to play with and can recall information without any prompts from staff. They get involved at group time, are able to identify different types of weather, the dates and months of the year, and love to talk about items they have brought in for 'show and tell'.

All children use marks readily to represent their ideas and older children are adept at writing their own names. Children are adept at using the laptop computer on their own as well as receiving individual attention from staff. Children gain confidence in using numbers in their play and respond enthusiastically to challenges to extend their mathematical vocabulary and skills in planned activities and daily routines. Their physical skills develop and improve through a wide variety of experiences, including dance, and team games with a parachute.

The children have access to a variety of art and craft materials which allows them to be imaginative in their creative play. With guidance from staff they are able to make a variety of usable items, such as Christmas decorations, which they take home for their parents. They are also able to relate moments in their home life into their imaginary play, for example, talking to each other on pretend mobile phones about what they will do after play school.

Children are progressing very well, supported by the staff team's secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Planning is detailed and covers all areas of learning comprehensively in the inventive programme of activities, although staff consider they do not cover music activities enough within the plans. Children have participated in watching butterflies emerge from chrysalis to making aeroplanes and flying them. Right from the start, staff find out about children's skills, interests and needs and build on this information effectively to help children achieve as much as they can. Effective monitoring of children's progress, ensures that older children are appropriately challenged. A flexible approach to planning and a good balance between adult and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children learn about equal opportunities and people with special needs through the extensive range of activities they participate in, for example, visits from an African dance troop and a blind lady with her guide dog. Children also have access to a range of books and toys showing positive images of equality. The individual needs of all children who attend are well met by the group's provision of a special educational needs co-ordinator. The setting has effective arrangements to care for children with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Children learn to acknowledge and accept differences.

Children behave well. They begin to understand right and wrong through consistent boundaries, praise and the age appropriate methods staff use to manage behaviour, which include explanations, distraction and time out. Staff encourage children to resolve their own differences which helps them learn to take turns and share. Their clear guidance and gentle reminders about the consequences of their actions helps children to begin to accept the needs of others.

Partnership with parents is good. Extensive information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and effective communication through newsletters, daily chats and detailed notice boards, help staff and parents work together to help children make progress. Information is also provided so that parents can talk to their child at home about current topics being covered in the play school. Parents can also become directly involved with activities in the group. Parents interviewed reported that they regularly see their child's development records and can discuss them in detail with their child's key worker. Parents also reported that they feel staff are 'in tune' with the children and are always available to listen to parent's views. Children benefit from their parent's involvement in their learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The group displays their registration document. The provider ensures that the staff are suitable to work with the children through a robust recruitment and vetting procedure. All staff have been vetted and hold Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. Staff are regularly monitored and supervised.

The group's organisational plan is well thought out and readily available to meet the needs of the children and staff, for example, it takes into account the new 'Birth to three matters framework'. The owner and all her staff hold appropriate childcare qualifications to NVQ level 3 and 4. All staff hold current paediatric first aid course certificates.

Children's records are maintained confidentially and stored appropriately. The group has a complaints log available to parents but so far there are no entries. All Children Act regulations are met.

Leadership and management is good. The owner has a clear vision of the type of care she offers to children to enable them to achieve well. She has plans for the future to improve on procedures and practices to meet her high standards. Her organisation of the group ensures that staff and children work in a calm, absorbing atmosphere where learning is encouraged. She encourages staff to work as a team, contribute to the activity planning and take on individual responsibilities. For example, one member of staff is the lead person for child protection, others are key workers who are able to work directly with parents. She offers them training opportunities to enhance their roles. The group's appraisal systems ensures that their comprehensive policies and procedures are consistently applied and enables staff to review their professional development. Children benefit from highly qualified and skilled staff. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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.

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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):

- obtain written permission from parents for their children to participate in food activities.

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):

- ensure that planning gives children the opportunity to explore different types of music and musical instruments on a regular basis.

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