



Blendon Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115340
Inspection date	28 February 2006
Inspector	Justine George
Setting Address	St James The Great Church Hall, Bladindon Drive, Bexley, Kent, DA5 3BS
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Registered person	The Management Committee of Blendon Pre-school
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

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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?

Blendon Pre-School opened in 1969. It moved to its present location at St James the Great Church Hall in Bexley, in May 2000. The committee run Pre-School is well established within the local community and serves families from the surrounding residential area.

Blendon Pre-School is open on a sessional basis; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 9.15 to 12.00 noon, and Wednesday afternoon from 12.30 to

14.30, term time only.

There are 24 children on role, 16 of which receive funding for nursery education, all are 3 year olds. Currently the pre-school has a few children with special educational needs. There are no children attending who have English as an additional language.

The setting receives support from an advisory teacher from Bexley Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

A team of five staff work with the children at any one time. The staff team have worked together for a number of years. Four members of staff hold early years qualifications, one of which is a qualified teacher. Other staff have early years experience.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a clean and hygienic environment, and effective procedures are in place to minimise the risk of infection. Should children become unwell, staff contact parents so they can be taken home. Children are excluded from the setting to prevent the spread of infection. In the event of children needing medication, staff are aware of their responsibilities in obtaining written parental consent and recording the required details in line with regulations, although provision is not in place to record such details. Written parental consent is in place for emergency medical treatment, ensuring children are cared for in line with parents wishes. Children's hygiene is promoted as they have access to soap in the bathroom, and dry their hands using a paper towel. Children are aware of the need to wash their hands before having a snack and using wipes. Children are reminded to use tissues for runny noses, and waste is suitably disposed of using bins. Staff are responsible for cleaning the furniture and equipment, and anti-bacterial sprays are used to clean areas, before children sit down to eat. As a result, the risk of infection is reduced.

Children are learning about their bodies and show independence in their self help skills. Most children manage their own personal hygiene in toileting, and staff support children who need help by offering reminders and taking children to the toilet if required. Children recognise when they are thirsty and can freely access water during the session. Children show independence and good control in pouring their own drinks. Mid-way through the session, a dedicated snack table is set up allowing children to make their own choice if they would like a snack, with some reminders from staff for those who have not yet eaten. Children are given a choice of flavoured milk, or orange squash, which they pour themselves, and they have a biscuit. However, the snacks and drinks offered are not nutritious, as they are sweet, and disguised with flavourings. As a result, children are not making healthy choices.

Children's physical health is suitably promoted. During the session, large equipment including a trampoline, and a see-saw is set out. This is changed daily, with a climbing frame used the next day. Children also participate in some physical activity

of running, hopping or jumping up and down the length of the hall. Although, this is for a very short time at the end of the session. However, physical play is not well planned to provide children with sufficient challenge. They manage the climbing equipment with ease, and the few provisions set out, mean play is not spontaneous as children have to wait their turn to use the same equipment. As a result, some children start to run around after each other during the session, and staff have to intervene to tell them to stop. Opportunities for fresh air are also minimal even though children have access to a large, spacious garden. As a result, children's physical well-being is not fully promoted.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a safe environment, and are cared for by kind and caring staff. Children are confident in seeking cuddles, and interact with staff throughout the session. As a result, children are secure and settled, and their emotional well being is fostered. Children separate positively from their carers and are eager to explore the stimulating environment. Equipment is safe for children to use, and organised to prevent accidents from happening. Space allows for children to move around comfortably, avoiding obstacles. In the event of an accident, children are protected as at least one member of staff has a valid first aid certificate, and other staff are due to attend training. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in recording accidents, and ensuring parents sign the accident book. Although, full names of children, time of the accident, the treatment children receive, is not consistently recorded.

Staff give high priority to children's safety on the premises. Locks are in place to prevent children from leaving the setting. Precautions are in place to minimise potential risks including socket covers. Floor mats are used when children use larger equipment, and toys and equipment are in good condition, suitable for their purpose, and for children's age and stage of development. Fire protection equipment including smoke detectors, extinguishers and a fire blanket are in place, and regular fire drills are carried out and practiced with the children. Children are well supervised at all times as there is a high staff ratio. Rules are in place to help children learn about safety. For example, when using the climbing equipment. There are quite a lot of children using it at the same time, but staff are close by, and ask children to wait until the person in front has moved on. Children are also encouraged to walk rather than run. However, explanations are not given as to why children should do what staff ask, preventing children from fully understanding the benefits of the rules.

Children are encouraged to care for the environment and the equipment. Should children drop toys onto the floor, they are asked to put them back on the table. Children are encouraged to tidy up at the end of the session, putting toys back into boxes, ready for staff to store them away. Such activities help children to develop independence, and take responsibility in caring for the pre-school.

Staff are vigilant at arrival and departure times, and designated staff are assigned to such areas to ensure children do not leave the premises. Staff are aware of who will collect children, as details are recorded, password systems are in place, and contact

would be made should an unfamiliar adult arrive. Children's well-being is suitably fostered as staff have satisfactory knowledge of the possible signs and symptoms of abuse. Should staff suspect that a child may be at risk from harm, they would share their concerns with the designated child protection co-ordinator, who would keep records, and refer concerns to social services. However, staff's knowledge of possible signs and symptoms is basic, and referrals may be delayed as staff make on going observations, rather than referring concerns straight away.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy to enter the setting. They separate from their parents and carers positively and are eager to explore the provisions on offer. Children are independent in choosing the activity they would like to participate in, and have a wide range of provisions to choose from, reflecting all areas of learning and the curriculum. As a result, children show confidence and curiosity in exploring the environment. However, play is interrupted with group registration and the focus story. As a result, some children find it hard to concentrate on the story, as they want to explore, and staff have to intervene to tell them to listen, or sit still. After their story, children are free to play, and staff spend time engaging in their play, or encourage them to participate in topic related activities.

The room is inviting to children. Posters and a few examples of children's work are displayed. Toys and resources are set out on tables, or on mats on the floor allowing children to play comfortably. Small world areas include a farm which is attractively laid out encouraging children to play. Role play areas include a shop with tills, baskets and pretend food items, a selection of dressing up clothes, and a play house. Children use a variety of puzzles, and manipulate play dough. They use paints to create pictures, and equipment to help them develop their fine motor skills, including threading cotton reels and button boards. Some large equipment is set out to encourage gross motor skills, although this is not enough for all children, and they have to wait their turn.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation stages, and the stepping stones children follow to make progress towards the early learning goals. Staff plan themes for all children to explore, and related activities are planned throughout the session. Plans inform key workers of the aims of the activity, and provide a clear purpose of what children are expected to do. Staff highlight the aims as children participate, to show what stage they are at. However, plans do not reflect children's individual needs or interests, as the observations made are very general, and are in place for all children. As a result, it is unclear how much progress children are making, as observations lack specific details. Further more, staff do not make full use of child initiated learning to inform them of their achievements, and stage of development. Staff do not make observations spontaneously during the session. Therefore, children may not be sufficiently challenged, as they may already have achieved the aims of the activity

through other experiences.

Children are making progress in their personal, social, and emotional development. They show good levels of confidence and self esteem as they separate from their parents and carers positively, and are beginning to make friendships with others. Most children manage their own personal needs of toileting, and are independent in self care, washing their hands, and pouring their own drink. The sessional structure offers children time to explore, and allows them to make decisions about what they want to play with from the resources set out. As a result, children are developing independence, and are secure in an additional environment outside the family home.

Children are developing a knowledge and understanding of the world through the use of IT equipment. Children use shopping tills in the role play area, and have access to the computer on a regular basis. Children use the computer to complete simple programmes, for example, Postman Pat puzzles. Staff support children well, explaining and showing them what they have to do. Vocabulary is introduced, including 'click and drag', 'mouse', and 'cursor', the 'play' and 'exit' signs are also explained, to prevent children from exiting the game, accidentally. Children are competent at clicking and dragging the puzzle pieces to complete the puzzle, showing good control and concentration. Children also participate in cookery, celebrating pancake day. They explore and investigate changes in the ingredients when milk or egg is added, making scientific discoveries. However, children have minimal experiences to explore the natural world, as they do not regularly use the outside play area.

Children have the opportunity to develop creatively through the use of role play. They enjoy using the shopping equipment, carrying around shopping in their basket, and showing others their collection of money. Children also enjoy playing with the dolls and developing a caring attitude towards others. Small world play is well used, and as a result, such experiences encourage children to use their imagination. Children have suitable opportunities to explore messy creative play. They use paints on a daily basis, and paper and writing tools provide children with opportunities to mark make freely, representing their own ideas. However, during an activity of making a pancake man, staff tend to intervene, sticking the arms and legs in the correct place, rather than talking about the position of body parts with the child. Staff plan opportunities for children to explore music. They make shakers, and participate in singing and music and movement sessions. However, these are planned, and opportunities to explore music spontaneously are minimal.

Children explore maths through everyday play activities such as button boards, exploring shape and colour, using their pancake man to explore positional language of in, behind, and under. Children can count to five and beyond, counting out objects in play, but children miss out on counting the number of children at registration time. During a cooking activity, children count out how many spoonfuls of flour are used, but staff do not talk about the scales and introduce the concept of weight, or discuss volume when measuring liquid. The provision of sand and water is also minimal, preventing children from exploring many mathematical concepts.

Children explore a range of materials to promote fine manipulative skills. They complete jigsaw puzzles, putting the correct shape into the space. They use writing

tools to freely create marks, and participate in activities such as threading, mixing ingredients, manipulating dough, and using scissors. As a result, children are developing their hand and eye co-ordination. Children are confident in using their large motor skills and can manage large equipment easily. However, such equipment is minimal, and does not provide sufficient challenge.

Children participate in group story time. Most enjoy the story of the pancake man, and join in with repetitive phrases, such as 'stop', and predict the next part of the story. Children also look at a book of their choice at the end of the session. However, the book area is not often used freely by the children, and staff do not encourage them to look at books throughout the session. Children are beginning to recognise their name, although stickers are used as a visual clue for all children. Children find their name card when they first enter the session, and again before they have a snack. Posters are also displayed, helping children to become familiar with print in the environment. Children's writing skills are developing. Children use the writing table to make marks and draw pictures, however, opportunities for writing for a purpose are minimal, as children tend to write at the writing area only, rather than link the experience to other areas of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to write their names on their work, and some form recognisable letters, and hold writing tools correctly.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. The pre-school provides information for parents about the setting, in which some policies and procedures are shared, including admissions, and the sickness policy. A parents notice board provides information, and regular newsletters are also sent out, to inform parents of future events, and dates. However, parents do not receive information about the early years curriculum, and as a result, they are not familiar with the Foundation Stages, and how children are learning. Although, parents receive information about planned activities children are involved in. Parents are happy with the service provided, and feel their children are settled. They feel well informed about their children and the service due to information shared both in writing and verbally. Parents are also aware they can look in their child's folder, and discuss their progress with staff at any time. However, parents are not encouraged to share their knowledge of children's achievements when they first start at the pre-school. Therefore, family experiences are not sought, and children's starting points are not established. As a result, experiences offered may not fully extend children's learning.

Equal opportunities are well promoted in the setting. Children have equal access to the provision on offer, allowing them to make independent choices in play. As a result, gender stereotypes are prevented. Children are free to choose from the range of resources and participate equally in the activities provided. Toys and equipment reflect positive images of culture, through puzzles, books, dolls and play people. Children learn about the various roles of those who help us in the community. Small world police officers and fire fighters help children to develop awareness of the community in which we live, fostering their cultural development. This is further

developed as professionals in the community visit the setting to help children learn about the different roles of people who can help us. Children also learn about the cultures of others as a variety of festivals and events are celebrated. Children have been looking at similarities between Hindu and Christian wedding ceremonies, and are involved in making pancakes for pancake day. Such experiences foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Overall, children show good levels of behaviour and self control. They relate well to each other with some friendships beginning to form. Children are beginning to share toys and resources fairly, and take turns with minimal reminders. Staff often use praise to foster children's self esteem and confidence and reward good behaviour using stickers. Although children are unsure of why the stickers are given, as staff do not give explanations to develop their understanding of what they have done positively. In dealing with inappropriate behaviour, positive strategies are not used. Staff often raise their voices to communicate with children, and again explanations are not used to help develop children's understanding of why the behaviour is unwanted.

Children with special educational needs are suitably supported in the setting. The nominated SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) for the pre-school, works with staff to identify specific needs, liaise with parents to share concerns, and to seek permission to request further support. Other professionals include the area SENCO, who supports staff in making observations of children's individual needs, and how best to support them. However, Individual Education Plans (IEP's) are not devised for children, and as a result, children's specific needs are not appropriately met, or reflected in the planning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children are cared for by suitable staff as the majority have had the required checks carried out. Children are protected against un-vetted adults as they are never left on their own with children, or deal with any personal care. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable. The manager ensures staff have qualifications and/or experience. She would take up references and is aware of the new process of obtaining CRB checks from registered bodies. Existing staff are qualified to NVQ level three in child care, and one member of the team is a qualified teacher. Other staff have early years experience.

Staff have attended many courses, although, they have not attended any recent training. Staff keep their knowledge up-to-date by reading information sent through from Ofsted, and liaising with the advisory teacher from the borough. As a result, staff are aware of the new inspection framework, and have suitable knowledge of the recent amendments to foster children's well-being. Staff participate in regular meetings to share information about the setting and the children, and plan the early years curriculum. However, individual meetings such as appraisals, are not held to identify individual strengths or weaknesses. As a result, some staff are unclear about

some of the settings policies and procedures, for example, child protection.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The staff team are well established and have been working together for many years. They work towards the same goal of ensuring children are safe, happy, and make progress in their learning. This is evident as most staff are well deployed, and all engage with the children in various activities. Staff with key children have a clear purpose. Planned activities are carried out with all children over the course of the week. However, observations of unplanned learning are not made, and staff without key children are not used to their full potential. As a result, child initiated learning is not used as part of ongoing observation and assessment, and is not used to inform planning. Organisation of time is good. The inclusive environment allows children to spend time participating in planned activities, and they have ample time to explore the provisions set out, making independent choices in play. However, some children become a little restless half way through the session, running around and chasing each other. Although, overall, children enjoy their time at the setting.

The setting has all required records, policies and procedures to ensure the safe and efficient management of the children and the setting, and staff are expected to familiarise themselves with them. Attendance records are in place, and adult: child ratios are adhered to. Staff record their attendance, and a visitors book is in place to monitor adults in the setting. The setting is aware of recent amendments to the standards, and have a complaints policy to reflect current practice, although, provision is not in place to record complaints.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, two recommendations were raised. The first was for staff to develop their awareness and understanding of the importance of a consistent approach when managing children's behaviour. When dealing with behaviour, staff often use raised voices, and explanations are not used to develop children's understanding of why they need to behave, for example to protect themselves, or to think about the needs of others. As a result, minimal progress has been made, and a recommendation is raised for staff to manage behaviour positively in a way that helps develop children's understanding.

The second recommendation was for staff to develop the end of the pre-school session to ensure that individual needs and learning opportunities are met. Staff have made some progress, as children spend a short time sitting together to sing songs, and participate in physical exercise.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints 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 children have regular opportunities for fresh air, and have a range of equipment for large physical exercise that provides sufficient challenge
- improve staff's knowledge of child protection issues
- ensure positive strategies are used to manage children's behaviour which develops their understanding

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 observations reflect children's specific individual achievements which shows their progress in planned and unplanned areas of learning
- ensure observations are used to plan for children's individual needs and interests

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