



Blue Grass Purple Cow Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	06 February 2006
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Registered person	Blue Grass Purple Cow 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

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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 good. 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?

Blue Grass Purple Cow nursery is privately owned. It opened in 2005 and operates from a converted church with three base rooms for children. It is situated in Higher Disley and serves the community of Disley and beyond. A maximum of 43 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08.00 to 18.00. All children share access to secure outdoor play areas.

There are currently 22 children from 0 to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 3 children

receive funding for nursery education. The nursery currently supports children with special educational needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs four staff working with children, including the acting manager. All of these staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because practitioners employ a thorough knowledge of appropriate health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, staff vigilantly ensure that children wash hands, blow noses, keep warm and protect their clothes with suitable aprons, plastic ones for messy play and towelling ones for meals. Most staff are also trained in first aid and food hygiene and they employ good routines for nappy change and milk preparation. They monitor fridge temperatures and have systems to ensure that all bedding is clean and personal to the child using it until it is laundered at the end of the day. There are clear written sickness procedures followed and parental consent is obtained for the appropriate use of many regularly prescribed medicines. As a matter of course, parents are always contacted before any medicine is given and parents sign the record to acknowledge the entry. All these procedures are successfully enhancing children's health in the setting.

Staff set aside time for children to become as independent as possible in taking care of their own hygiene. They also talk to them about why hygienic procedures are adopted. This means that children aged 3 and 4 know about how to get rid of germs and the fact that germs can make you poorly. They know that they all wear slippers to keep the indoors clean. They even remind me to bring my coat the next day so that I can be warm enough to play outside with them.

Children enjoy very regular physical activity outdoors despite the current restrictions while the garden is being modelled. They play imaginary games and utilise balls and other small equipment to nurture their sense of space, ability to control their bodies, and ability to use small equipment. Children can also rest and sleep according to their individual needs because there is a range of suitable sleeping equipment and areas which can be used for rest. Staff are carefully following children's individual sleep routines. For example, staff cuddle and rock some babies to sleep and stroke the backs of toddlers who need to have a sleep after lunch. Cots, sleep mattresses and rocking chairs are all appropriately used.

The welcoming accommodation and small staff group very successfully promote children's emotional well-being. It is warm and homely, yet stimulating. At present, staff and group sizes are small, allowing children of varying ages to spend time together and enjoy the consistent input of caring staff. All children receive input mostly from their key worker and all children over 14 months old are eating together at one circular table.

Children are very well nourished and enjoy a healthy, balanced diet because snacks and drinks given in the setting are healthy, home made and without added sugar. For example, children eat apple, grapes and water at snack time, followed by a chicken and rice dish for lunch. Staff are well organised, preparing snacks efficiently and involving 3 and 4-year-olds in laying table and serving. In this way, children enjoy the social aspect of meal times and can talk amongst themselves and with staff. This also provides children with opportunities to learn about healthy eating so that 3 and 4-year-olds' understanding of this is good. They politely ask for seconds and thirds and always drink water which they know is good for them. However, plates are not always used for children's snacks of fruit as they select from a bowl and then put it on the table.

Children have their health and dietary needs met because practitioners work well with parents to elicit any information about special dietary needs through enrolment forms at the beginning of placement. At present, special diets can be sensitively accommodated so that all children eat the same meals. For example, a vegetarian meal is offered on the days when a vegetarian child is attending. Staff realise that in future this will depend upon the range of requirements and whether the children concerned are in each day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, bright, welcoming, secure and safe environment. The rooms are freshly decorated and there are displays of children's art and craft work. These relate to the current 'space' theme and the previous 'pets' and 'Chinese New Year' themes. Equipment is suitable and safe, so that babies are well positioned in a variety of seating positions for play and activities. All children benefit from the warm under-floor heating and suitable rugs to play on. However, there is little stimulation on the walls at a low height for children. For example, there are few posters or displays of number, letter, photos, or images of disability or other cultures. However, children are involved in making wall displays to use, such as, 'the feely rocket' and 'the alphabet alien' which will be used to further their learning in texture and letter during the space theme month.

Children use innovative, superior and stimulating resources which are new, clean and purchased from reputable sources. These resources contribute significantly to children's enjoyment and achievement. For example, book stands are stable and low so that children of all ages can safely choose books to look at. Likewise, babies' shape sorters, feely toys and stacking rings are bright and multifunctional because they also light up, play music, make sounds and 'speak'. Resources are also specifically chosen to help develop children's interest and learning about the theme. For example, balls which glow and change colour and fibre optic lights are used to bring the space role play area to life. In addition, junk and household items are used for modelling and crafts. These are clean and suitable to use.

Children are secure and well supervised throughout the day because staff ratios are kept up with use of the manager and registered person to cover breaks. Sleeping

babies and children are regularly checked and baby monitors appropriately used. The upstairs staff area is gated and has a viewing window to the main room so that children can be seen and heard. However, emergency escape plans have not been practised and contact information kept to hand. This means that children's safety is compromised in an emergency situation because the hazards of evacuation have not been assessed or addressed.

There is good security to the entrance doors via a buzzer and intercom system, so that only staff let people in. All children are signed in and out by parents and a password system is used for any different people coming to collect. Staff are vigilant to ensure that children move about the setting safely and with increasing responsibility for themselves. A safe and homely feel is created because no adults or children wear shoes in the nursery.

Risk assessments are up-to-date and action plans arise from them. For example, outings, spillages, use of the car park and movements across to the cow shed building have all been separately assessed. The health and safety officer ensures that weekly safety checks are completed on all areas of the nursery so that lights, smoke detectors, door alarms, safety gates, flexes and socket covers are all checked. Most cleaning is done before children arrive and necessary clearing up is done efficiently and safely during the day. Children's safety is assured by these measures.

Children are protected from abuse because staff have an adequate understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They are aware of what to do in the event of an allegation being made against them and know who to contact if they are concerned about a child. Enrolment forms explain to parents that staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to social services. Consent is also obtained from parents for nursery use of photographs of children. However, up-to-date reference information about child protection is not readily available or displayed for parents to see.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are developing a high level of confidence and self-esteem because staff listen to them, ask questions of them and have high expectations of what they can achieve. For example, they all sit together at the beginning of the day to discuss the calendar and weather. The toddlers participate and enjoy watching the older ones answering harder questions. Similarly, babies beam delightedly as they successfully push a shape into the correct place on the shape sorter. Toddlers clap in the right place copying the older children doing an action song. However, on some occasions the mixing of diverse ages is not conducive to children's individual development. For example, a 2-year-old comes to the writing table when a staff member is doing number and letter work with a funded child and sometimes all the children have the same story. This means that activities cannot be pitched to each child's developmental level to maximise their progress.

Children are happy, settled, and interested in what they are doing because staff are

committed, enthusiastic and work well together as a team. Staff plan activities carefully and are able to give many children one-to-one time while numbers in the nursery remain low. For example, a child and staff member play with the astronaut and rocket pairs game. (A staff member has made it to use during the space theme month.) The cards are adapted to help a four-year-old practise number and colour matching as well as extending the child's imagination and creativity as she constructs ideas of where the rockets and astronauts may be going.

Children's enjoyment and achievements are good because staff skilfully and enthusiastically challenge and develop their play. For example, staff join in with children going into space in the space role play area they have constructed. They help children to dress up as astronauts, put on appropriate music and all go through the special tunnel into the space zone. They talk about the planets that they are seeing and what it is like to be in space. Staff then extend this further when they play outside, playing spaceship landings, moon walking and discovering aliens.

Children's opportunities to investigate are mostly planned and the main room is not set out to provide free access to all areas for children to choose their own learning. Role play, craft, dressing up, books and small world areas are always ready for use. However, areas to experiment, explore and spontaneously use water, sand or paint are not set out, except when there are planned activities incorporating these resources. Staff believe that resources should be used in a planned way and to support the theme, but there seems to be less choice for children during free play because of this. As a result, toddlers sometimes fiddle with the CD player or the musical instruments basket or take items from the Chinese interest table because they are looking for something to explore and staff are not directing them all the time in planned activities.

Nursery education:

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are fully committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere; a varied programme of activities covering all the areas of learning is in place, as is an approach which fosters good relationships, self-confidence, good social behaviour and high levels of independence. Children are making sound progress in most areas of learning because staff are successful in providing for their personal, social and emotional development. This underpins children's ability to learn because it gives them self-confidence and a desire to learn new skills.

Staff present activities to children in a way that truly interests them and helps them to focus, persist and resist distraction. For example, staff present stories in an interactive way, asking questions and linking the stories to relevant day-to-day happenings. They suggest different ways that children can attach the 'fire' to the junk model rockets they are making, so that children can find the best way to cut, stick and construct their rocket themselves. These methods, expectations and questions challenge children to achieve as much as they can and work best when funded children are working separately from their younger friends.

Children's progress is best in creative development. This is because staff create excellent opportunities for children to use their imagination, explore materials and

music and express and communicate ideas. Children are captivated by the space topic. They can talk about what their favourite planet would be like and can create alien figures and rockets from junk and craft materials. Physical development and communication, language and literacy are sound. Staff ensure that children have outdoor and indoor play. For example, they move like aliens to the music, jumping, wobbling and swaying or run around flying and landing their rockets. They have a good sense of health and bodily awareness because staff talk about healthy eating and why we wash our hands to keep germs away. Language for communication and thinking is developing well because staff talk to children and engage them in conversations about everything they are doing. Some aspects of mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are less regularly presented and as a result, children's progress is held back. For example, programmable equipment and toys are not regularly used. Likewise, opportunities to explore shape, space and measure are not presented each day, although they are planned.

Children's achievements are mostly good because staff have a thorough understanding of the Foundation Stage and how young children learn. Staff plan a broad range of activities according to themes and are evaluating children's success and learning from them. However, time and resources are not always used to best effect. For example, the daily routine is unclear at times; children go out to play three times and do similar things each time. There are also too few designated times and indoor areas where children may construct, create, draw, read, write, count, sort, and experiment.

Providers have good knowledge about children upon entry. Questionnaires are completed by parents to convey their child's starting points and needs. However, these are not being well used. Base line assessments are not completed to ascertain children's individual starting points or the requirements for their next steps. There are records being kept of children's work and some notes about particular successes or strides which children are taking. These are kept in scrap books and personal diary home books which celebrate positive progress. However, there are not yet any clear pictures of children's individual progress through the stepping stones to the early learning goals. In addition, planning is not being tailored to reflect children's individual learning needs. This means that individual children are not making progress as quickly as they might.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children join in well, take responsibility and play a productive part in the setting. This is because the warm environment and friendly, purposeful staff help children to feel at home from the outset. Children and parents are greeted at the door by their key worker or the manager and all children start the day together in the main room. Some activities are laid out ready to use. All aspects of the sessions then promote children's responsibility for themselves and others as they play. For example, 2 to 4-year-olds help to lay the table for snack and put on their own shoes, coat and hat for going out to play.

Children are helped to consider and value diversity because some books, dolls, and games show positive images of culture and special need. Activities have successfully brought festivals, such as Chinese New Year, to life for children. However, there are few posters or pictures displayed which show people from other cultures. In addition, few resources or ideas are used to promote children's awareness of disability.

Children with special needs are included fully in the life of the setting because the environment is all accessible and there is plenty of space for ease of movement. Adults are committed to inclusion and are enthusiastic about undertaking relevant training. They liaise with parents and relevant professionals to ensure that they plan and work together using consistent techniques for the benefit of children with any particular needs. For example, they complete detailed home books to ensure good feedback to parents who have concerns about their child. However, staff are not completing assessment and planning documents to clarify and ensure consistent methods and targets for individual children with emerging needs.

Children behave well and understand responsible behaviour because staff are motivated, vigilant and interested in teaching children how to behave well and consider others. They praise children when they adopt good table manners, such as, asking politely for more snack and waiting for everyone to have their food before starting to eat. Rules are not rehearsed or displayed, but kindness to their friends in nursery and outside is promoted because staff remind children that this is the behaviour that is wanted.

The quality of partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Children receive good consistency of care throughout the nursery because staff work well together with parents. Staff are approachable and interested and make time to speak to parents. They produce daily written feedback sheets for children under 2, giving details of the care given and activities undertaken. Children aged 2 to 3 have home books which note any particular successes or good experiences that a child has had. Enrolment information is detailed and covers most terms, conditions, policies and procedures quite comprehensively. However, information about how equal opportunities and special needs are catered for is not given or displayed; neither is information displayed or given about the early learning goals or Birth to three matters. Newsletters keep parents informed about events, themes and staff changes, but there are no ideas given for parents of funded children as to how they can be involved in their child's learning from day-to-day. These weaknesses impact on pre-school children if parents lack information and are not supporting their child's learning at home.

Parents express high levels of satisfaction with their children's progress and the quality of the setting and staff. For example, "the nursery has provided x with the care and support he has needed and have handled his particular needs with such professionalism and enthusiasm that he has made outstanding progress in the time he has been with them. The facilities are first class and he finds the environment warm and friendly."

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

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Recruitment and vetting procedures work well to ensure that children are well protected and cared for by suitable staff with qualifications in childcare. Staff also have adequate opportunities to improve their knowledge by attending courses and workshops, using this knowledge effectively to provide children with a wide range of learning experiences.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The providers and the acting manager have a clear sense of purpose and direction to provide a high quality setting which staff, parents and children are proud of. They aim to improve the overall delivery and assessment of the nursery education to ensure that children enter school having had a good pre-school experience. They develop solid professional and supportive relationships with all staff and aim to support their professional development through supervision and time for courses. For example, they act as good role models and motivate staff by contributing a store voucher to each staff member who gets five thank-you notes from colleagues about things they have done well. The providers participate in this and the notes are posted in the staff kitchen to boost the morale of all. Leaders also evaluate their strengths and weaknesses well and are open to suggestions about how to improve the setting further.

Staff deployment contributes well to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Staff-to-child ratios are good and staff work cooperatively together in each room to effectively support each child. Staff are vigilant and have a clear sense of purpose as they spread their observation, assistance, support and teaching to all the children attending. They are successful at motivating and enhancing children's enjoyment and social skills, especially when one-to-one time is given. However, their current role compromises the individual achievements of children because they are rarely working with children of the same age and stage of development. This means that older or more able children are held back in their progress unless staff are fully conversant with the individual next steps that each child is ready to take.

Policies and procedures work generally well in practice to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. For example, child details and consent forms provide sufficient information to enable good care to be given and records of accidents, incidents, and medication are properly kept. There is a good operational plan; staff files and policy documents, which support the care of children according to the National Standards, enable all staff to understand the workings of the setting and their roles within it.

The provision meets the needs of the range of the 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.

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 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 that fire drills are carried out periodically and that all necessary contact details are readily accessible to use in case of emergency
- ensure that information and resources about equal opportunities and special needs, including disabilities, are readily available in appropriate forms to children and parents.

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):

- observe, assess and record what individual children do and use these assessments to plan the next steps for children's learning and development
- ensure that parents receive good quality information about the educational programme, their child's progress and achievements, and ideas for becoming actively involved in their child's learning at home.

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