



Busy Bees Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123546
Inspection date	20 April 2006
Inspector	Jane Mount
Setting Address	52 Bernard Street, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5QN
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Registered person	Busy Bees Nurseries 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 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?

Busy Bees Day Nursery opened in 1991. It operates from a purpose built building which includes a secure outside play area and is situated in Bernard Street, close to the centre of St Albans. The nursery serves the local and wider area.

A maximum of 50 children under 5 years may attend at any one time. The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round and sessions are from 07:15 to 18:45. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 72 children aged under

5 years on roll and includes 13 funded 3 year olds and 10 funded 4 year olds. The setting supports children who have special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

There are 17 members of staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have an early years qualification to NVQ level 2 or 3.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning how to be healthy. Staff support and help children to gain an understanding of good health and hygiene practices. They remind children to use tissues to wipe their noses and to dispose of them appropriately and children are encouraged to put their hand over their mouth when they cough to stop germs from spreading. Most children know they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet or before eating and some older children understand why they must wash their hands. Children enjoy using the wall soap dispenser which encourages them to wash their hands thoroughly.

Children's health is generally protected because staff are aware of good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of infection. Staff clean tables with anti bacterial spray and always wear gloves and aprons when changing nappies. However, good hygiene procedures are not always observed and are not consistent throughout the nursery. For example, although children can access drinks at all times, staff do not monitor the use of the cups thereby risking cross infection when different children use the same cup. Also, in some rooms hand washing by staff is not always carried out before food is served. The overall cleanliness of the nursery is satisfactory but some areas are only adequate and the manager says it is because of difficulties with the cleaning company which are now resolved.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy varied and nutritious meals and snacks with menu's displayed for parents. All meals are freshly prepared and cooked on the premises daily and the menu takes account children's individual dietary needs. Special dietary requirements are met well with good procedures in place to ensure all staff are fully informed. Children enjoy their food and mealtimes are used as a time for social interaction with staff sitting talking with the children.

Children have opportunities to exercise and develop their physical skills within the daily routine and physical play is incorporated in the planning of children's activities. Resources allow children to climb, run, jump and balance. A range of physical play experiences are provided for younger children. These are appropriate for their age and stage of development and allow them to try out new skills such as beginning to crawl or walk. Children are able to rest and be more active according to their needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised because staff are vigilant and use thorough risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. Children benefit from a child friendly environment where they can move around safely with appropriate safety precautions used, such as, safety gates, socket covers and regular fire practises. There are sound security systems in place and supervising entry to the nursery is well managed which ensures that no unauthorised persons are on site and that children are not put at risk.

Children are able to use a satisfactory range of safe and developmentally appropriate resources to promote their learning and development. Rooms are organised with child height furniture and children are able to independently access some resources. Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe. Staff explain some safe practices, such as why children should pick up dropped toys so that another child does not trip and hurt themselves and older children are taught how to hold scissors safely.

Children are safeguarded as staff have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures and they give priority to children's safety and welfare. There is a child protection policy which all staff are fully aware of and know how to implement.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel at ease in the nursery environment. They separate from their parents and carers and settle happily at the beginning of the day. A keyworker system is used and staff generally know their key children and their families well. Younger children's learning is generally promoted through the staff's knowledge of child development. Most staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matter's' framework and activities are planned in line with the framework. However, younger children's progress is not monitored sufficiently as observations of individual children's play and achievements are not regularly taken and assessment books are not always completed. This information is not then used effectively to plan future activities and play experiences to ensure children's individual developmental needs are always met.

Children are able to participate in a range of activities which provides a balance of free play and more structured play opportunities. Younger children are able to explore texture and creative play through taking part in planned activities such as painting, sand and water play. For example, children enjoy playing together with the sand and water, exploring the texture of the dry sand and pouring the water from one container to another. Younger children's independence is encouraged in some rooms and they are able to make choices from the activities available. Younger children have some opportunities to use their imaginations and enjoy playing in the home corner making 'breakfast' and taking the 'baby' for a walk in a buggy.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making steady progress towards the early learning goals and staff offer a range of activities which are generally balanced. Curriculum planning includes long, medium and short term plans and the six areas of learning. Plans are linked to the stepping stones and early learning goals but do not show how activities will be adapted for children who learn at different rates. Some activities are evaluated but this information is not generally used to inform future planning. Assessment records are maintained but observations and assessments taken of the children are not linked to the planning. Therefore, it cannot be ensured that children's developmental needs are always catered for and that children are making steady progress. Staff have been working hard to develop planning systems but do not have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Staff build trusting relationships with the children. They talk about safety and behaviour within routines. They are actively involved in children's play to promote learning. Children benefit from resources that are easily accessible and support children's independent learning and exploration. For example, pre-school children enjoy playing in the creative area and the home corner.

Children enjoy their surroundings and show an interest in what they do. They arrive happily and quickly settle and engage in activities with friends and staff. Children are beginning to distinguish between right and wrong and show consideration to each other. Children develop independence skills through helping to tidy away and are able to confidently put their aprons on for painting. Children are praised by staff which develops their self-esteem. Children participate in activities eagerly, for example, during the French session with the peripatetic teacher. Children have opportunities to experience music, imaginative play and explore varied materials and media on a regular basis. Children delight in dressing up as wild animals although the role play clothes are not easily accessible and children are unable to see themselves in a mirror. Some children are confidently able to count to 20. Mathematical concepts are reinforced through books, singing and counting during the daily routine. They explore concepts such as quantity and volume through sand and water play.

Children are able to speak clearly and confidently and are able to concentrate well, for example, until the end of a book. They enjoy stories and understand that print carries meaning. Children are exposed to letters and words on name pegs and labelling on boxes. Name cards are sometimes used but there are missed opportunities when children would benefit from having their name cards available to use, for example, when writing their name on a painting. Children enjoy experimenting with sounds and are helped to become familiar with letter sounds, for example, the letter sounds in a child's name. Children develop skills for emergent writing by using various mark making materials and are able to freely access writing materials. Children's physical skills are fostered with regular opportunities to exercise within the daily routine and physical play is incorporated in the planning of children's activities. Resources allow children to climb, run, jump and balance. Children have regular opportunities to explore and investigate. They enjoy planting sunflower seeds and watching them change and grow. There are some opportunities for children to find out about and identify everyday technology. Children have access to a computer and in their play are able to use telephones, calculators and binoculars.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's awareness of diversity and their understanding of others is promoted through the range of resources and activities they take part in. Children develop positive attitudes towards others as they select from the available resources reflecting diversity. Displays and posters throughout the nursery reflect positive images and help children to become aware of the wider world. Children learn about the local community through outings such as to the local market and to the park.

Children understand responsible behaviour and are beginning to learn right from wrong. Staff explain the implications their behaviour can have on others and children are encouraged to share and to play together. Children generally behave considerately and staff encourage them to show care and concern for others. For example, if a child is upset or has fallen and hurt themselves, ways of comforting the child are discussed. Children play well together and behaviour is dealt with in ways appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Children are taught to be polite and children are gently reminded to say 'please' and 'thank-you'. The nursery has systems in place to care for children with special needs and children with English as an additional language are well supported. The setting fosters children's spiritual, social and cultural development.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children benefit from a sound relationship between the nursery and parents. Information is exchanged daily between staff and parents to ensure children receive appropriate care and support. Parents evenings are held regularly and parents notice boards are used to share information throughout the nursery. Parent questionnaires are completed regularly and the findings are evaluated and addressed to ensure children receive quality care. Parents receive information about the nursery, including details of 'Birth to three matters' framework. However, parents do not receive sufficient relevant information regarding the Foundation Stage so they are fully informed and able to help their children make progress towards the early learning goals in partnership with the nursery.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are safeguarded because there are systems in place to ensure all staff working with children are suitable to do so. Recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who have relevant experience, qualifications, knowledge and skills. Appropriate checks are completed on all staff and any persons who have not been vetted would not have unsupervised access to children and all staff are aware of this.

Clear induction systems ensure staff are informed of the nurseries policies and procedures and these are generally implemented well. Training needs are identified through staff appraisals and supervisions. However, pre-school staff need to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage to ensure they can

deliver a more effective nursery curriculum.

Children are cared for by staff who are supportive of each other and work well together as a team. Ratios are always maintained and staff are generally well deployed with a keyworker system in operation. However, there are times within the nursery routine where younger children are not supported appropriately because of poor organisation of staff and resources. This means that at times young children are waiting for long periods of time with minimal support or interaction from staff and their individual needs are not always prioritised.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. The staff team are guided by the generally effective leadership of the manager who is a positive role model and has a clear vision of the needs of the children. Information from staff meetings is used to monitor and improve the quality of care and education. Most issues raised from the last inspection have been addressed, however, there are still some areas of weakness which remain outstanding.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to extend the range of books and review storage of toys and equipment to enable children to access them independently. Children now benefit from a varied range of books which are developmentally appropriate and their independence skills are generally promoted. The provider was also asked to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing and to develop an action plan setting out how staff training needs regarding behaviour management and child protection training would be met. Children's health is safeguarded in most rooms as hand washing procedures for both children and staff are generally carried out. Children's welfare is promoted as staff training needs are going to be addressed. Some staff have attended behaviour management and child protection training with plans for other staff to attend courses in the near future. The manager is the designated person for behaviour management and child protection and she has attended appropriate courses.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider was asked to ensure assessments and observations are used to identify and plan for children's next stages of learning. Busy Bees have devised their own tracker books using the stepping stones and early learning goals to assess children's progress. Keyworkers update these records but they are not generally used to inform planning. The provider was also asked to provide a wider range of creative materials, to increase the range of technological toys and equipment and to review resources so children have a greater choice. Children's learning is promoted as the pre-school room has been re-organised to enable children to access resources more easily, including an increased range of art and craft materials and technological toys.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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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):

- ensure children's progress is monitored effectively through the use of written observations and assessments for all children aged under 3 years and use this information to plan their future progress
- ensure high standards of hygiene are implemented consistently to ensure the risk of infection to children is minimised. (This refers particularly to hand washing, the overall cleanliness of the premises and monitoring drinking cups to ensure children are not sharing dirty cups and beakers)
- review staff deployment, groupings of younger children and the organisation of the nursery routine to ensure children's individual needs are taken into consideration.

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):

- develop planning and assessment systems that are informative, evaluative and highlight differentiation to meet the needs of all children
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage
- ensure parents are provided with relevant information regarding the Foundation Stage so they are fully informed and able to help their children make progress towards the early learning goals in partnership with the nursery.

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