



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 221753

DfES Number: 517469

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	03/11/2003
Inspector Name	Caroline Valerie Novak

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Buttercups Community Pre school
Setting Address	The Meadow School High Street Balsham Cambridge CB1 6DJ

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Buttercups Community Pre School 1027856
------	--

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Buttercups Community Pre School
Address	The Meadow School High Street, Balsham Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB1 6DJ

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Buttercups Community Pre-School opened in 1992. It operates from one large room in a demountable building on the site of Meadows Primary School in the centre of Balsham village. The pre-school serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 37 children from 2 to 5 years on roll. This includes seven funded three year olds and nine funded four year olds. The setting provides support for children who have special needs and for those who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times only. Sessions are from 09:00 until 12:00 with an additional session on Tuesday from 13:15 until 15:00 for younger children.

Three members of staff work with the children; one member of the staff has a level 3 early years qualifications, and two members of staff are currently working towards an accredited training qualification. The setting receives support from a teacher/mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

How good is the Day Care?

Buttercups Community Pre-school provides satisfactory care for children aged two to under five years.

Staff supervise children well and maintain good adult to child ratios, although the premises are not always secure. Most areas of the premises are safe and all of the necessary documents are in place. However, information available for parents and staff is not always consistent in reflecting current practice in the setting. The new management team have yet to develop a procedure to help new staff learn about their roles and child protection issues. A named deputy is not yet in place.

Relationships between adults and children are good and staff work well together. Children's behaviour is satisfactory and a range of suitable strategies helps them to

understand what is expected of them. Staff make good use of the indoor play space available, and provide an adequate range of resources to enable children to pursue their own interests and become independent. Staff plan a good range of experiences for children and encourage them to choose their own activities. However, the book corner does not provide children with a comfortable place to sit and look at books. Staff provide children with nutritious snacks, but children are not yet able to access drinking water freely. Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure children's good health and hygiene. There is a satisfactory system to provide support for children with special educational needs, but a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has not yet been nominated. Satisfactory strategies are in place to enable children who speak English as an additional language to communicate effectively.

Partnership with parents is good. They know what is going on through regular newsletters and an informative notice board. They receive regular updates on their children's progress and are confident to discuss progress with the staff at hand over times.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group agreed to carry out a number of actions.

A clear policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious has been established, so that they are able to act in the best interests of a sick children and can protect others from cross-infection.

A written non-smoking policy has been established, so that children are not at risk from the hazards of smoking within the setting.

The complaints policy has been amended to show Ofsted's address and telephone number, but Ofsted's role is not made clear nor is it clear that parents can contact the regulator if they need to.

Fresh drinking water has been provided in the form of a refrigerated water container. However, cups are not available to children so that they can access drinks from the container when they want to during the session.

What is being done well?

- The newly established team are all very keen to develop their practice and increase their knowledge of early years. They have established very good relationships between all members of staff and the management committee and they engage in regular discussions to support each other, share skills and develop successful teaching strategies.
- The staff provide a good range of interesting activities for children to access each day. They are interested in what children say and do and use praise and encouragement to help children to become confident and join in the activities they provide.

- The indoor play space is well organised to provide children with clearly defined areas to carry out different types of activity. Attractive displays of children's work makes the environment warm and welcoming for children and their families. The resources are easily accessible to children to promote their independence and enables them to pursue their own interests.

What needs to be improved?

- information and policies available to parents and staff (including the complaints procedure), so that it is up to date, consistent and reflects current practice within the setting
- safety, so that the premises are always kept secure and all areas accessible to children are free from hazards
- staff's knowledge and understanding of current Area Child Protection Committee procedures and the signs of child abuse, so that they can deal with any concerns effectively
- the systems for helping new staff to understand what is expected of them, so that they can carry out their role efficiently, and for deputising in the event of the manager's absence
- the procedure for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs, so that a designated person co-ordinates the system to provide appropriate care according to their individual needs

Outcome of the inspection

Satisfactory

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Set up suitable procedures to deputise in the event of the manager's absence from the setting and for induction of new staff.
6	Ensure that all areas of the premises accessed by children are safe (this

	refers to electrical sockets uncovered and hazards in the kitchen)and the premises are secure.
10	Identify a member of staff to take responsibility for co-ordinating the system for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs.
13	Ensure that all staff are informed of current Area Child Protection Committee procedures and are able to recognise the signs of child abuse.
14	Ensure documents and policies (including the complaints procedure) available to parents and staff provide information that is consistent, clear and reflects current practice in the setting.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

The provision for nursery education at Buttercups Community Pre-school is good. It enables children to make generally good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas.

Teaching is generally good. Adults use their sound knowledge of how children learn through practical experiences to plan a range of activities for children to experience. They provide an attractive environment, with well-defined areas for children to engage in different activities, and work alongside the children to help them become confident and form good relationships. However, curriculum planning is not yet informed by assessment and opportunities for children to extend their own learning through everyday routines are missed. Some large group activities, such as snack time, do not meet the needs of all of the children and learning is hindered when children are kept waiting for long periods of time without purposeful activity.

A system is in place to identify and support children with special educational needs, so that they can make good progress, though the system is not yet adequately co-ordinated to ensure a consistent approach. Satisfactory strategies are in place to help children with English as an additional language to communicate.

Leadership and management are generally good. Regular staff meetings enable the staff to share ideas and exchange information. Relationships within the newly established team are good, and staff work well together. The management committee delegate the day-to-day running of the group to the manager, and annual appraisals of all staff identify areas for further development.

The partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are well informed about the foundation stage, activities, and routines. They are able to approach the staff to discuss their children's progress and receive regular written reports. Their comments about their children's achievements outside the setting are not yet used to help plan the next steps for progress.

What is being done well?

- Relationships within the newly established team are good and everybody works well together to form a cohesive team. The management committee are keen to support staff development and an appraisal system enables them to be pro-active in identifying areas for further training. Regular team meetings take place so that all members of staff can share ideas and skills, and plan interesting activities to help children to make good progress. The team work in partnership with the primary school to ensure a consistent approach to the foundation stage and make the transition to school easier for children and parents.

- Children are confident and show high levels of self esteem. They form good relationships with each other and with adults and work together in small or large groups. They communicate well and use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to discuss their experiences, homes and families with understanding. They use a wide range of tools and objects skilfully and move with co-ordination and control.
- Adults provide a stimulating and attractive environment for children. They display children's own work on the walls in the setting, and plan an interesting range of activities for children each day. They encourage children to become independent by situating equipment at child height and the clear labelling of resources helps children to know where things are kept.

What needs to be improved?

- children's opportunities to learn about numbers and calculation and to use writing for a purpose through day to day routines and in meaningful contexts
- the use of time and resources, so that children can pursue their own interests and are not kept waiting for long periods of time between group activities
- curriculum planning so that medium and short term plans are linked and show how the basic provision will contribute to children's progress towards the early learning goals, taking advantage of everyday routines to help children learn
- assessment of children's progress, including parents observations of children's achievements outside of the setting, so that future activities build on what children already know and can do.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress in response to the key issues identified in the last inspection report.

Planning now shows what children are expected to learn from activities provided across all areas of learning. However, plans do not yet show how the continuous basic provision will promote learning and are not sufficiently detailed to enable practitioners to make the best use of the activities to help children learn.

The system for assessing children's progress is currently under review in the setting. Regular observations now take place but they are not yet used to identify the next steps that build on what children already know.

Staff training is identified at appraisal but new staff have not yet engaged in training that is relevant to curriculum planning and assessment.

Children have adequate opportunities to explore and select materials and use them imaginatively to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world and develop their creativity.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children are confident to try new activities and speak out at circle time. They show high levels of self esteem and form good relationships with each other and with adults in the group. They concentrate and sit quietly at self chosen activities, such as writing in the sand tray, and co-operate and share resources as they make rockets from duplo. However, some children display disruptive behaviour when they are kept waiting for group activities, such as snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children interact and speak clearly, using a wide range of vocabulary. They explore new words when they talk about fireworks or invent words of their own to describe the sounds that they make. They know initial sounds in their own name and recognise some written words. They enjoy looking at books and make up their own narratives as they play together in the home corner. However, they do not have adequate opportunities to use writing for a purpose in meaningful contexts.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children use numbers and counting in their play. They recognise written numerals and are beginning to show some understanding of simple calculations as they work out how many children are at the water tray. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe size and shape, and recognise a "striped line" pattern. They use their developing knowledge of mathematics to solve practical problems. However, opportunities for them to learn about mathematics through meaningful everyday activities are missed.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement:	Generally Good
------------	----------------

Children design and build fireworks from a range of materials, selecting their own resources from those available. They discuss watching fireworks in the "dark sky" and notice differences and similarities in the weather each day. They use the computer and everyday technology such as telephones and calculators with confidence. They talk about their families and home with understanding. Children learn about other cultures and beliefs through topic based activities and discussion at circle time.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children move confidently and imaginatively, indoors and out. They use a wide range of tools and handle large and small items with co-ordination and control. They are able to ride bicycles and can throw a ball to knock down skittles. They show an understanding of how their bodies work, and know that fruit is "good for you". They use a range of techniques to shape dough and construct rockets from stickle bricks or duplo. They show a sense of space and move around safely, avoiding collision.	

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children explore textures and colours playing with 'gloop' or painting bonfire pictures with their hands. They experiment with sounds that they can make using everyday objects, banging the pen rhythmically on the paper. They explore the effects of ink splashing on paper or of painting a picture with a paper towel. They enjoy using musical instruments and singing songs, moving their bodies to the rhythm. Children use their imagination in role play, acting out their narratives as they play.	

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

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- Continue to develop the system for planning the curriculum using stepping stones and early learning goals to identify learning outcomes. Show how all activities, including the basic provision, contribute to children's learning and ensure that medium and short term plans are linked. Make good use of time and resources available so that children are not kept waiting between group activities and are able to pursue their own interests.
- Continue to develop the system for assessing children's progress towards the early learning goals. Include regular observations by key workers together with parents' observations of their children's achievements outside the setting, and use assessment records to inform the planning of activities that build upon what children already know and can do.
- Improve the programmes for communication, language and literacy and mathematics, so that children are able to extend their learning in all of the aspects in meaningful contexts, using everyday routines and activities.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.