

Bow Brickhill Pre-school

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141894
Inspection date	30 April 2007
Inspector	Ann Hilary Guy
Setting Address	Church Hall, Church Road, Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Mk17 9JT
Telephone number	0780 3562480 or 01908 645923 (Tracey)
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Registered person	Bow Brickhill Pre-school
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care, Out of School care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bow Brickhill Pre-school is run by a voluntary management committee. It registered in 1990 and operates from the church hall in the village of Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. It is open weekday during term time from 09:15 to 12:00 with an optional lunch club from 12:00 to 13:00. An afternoon session is offered on Monday from 12.30 to 14.30. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 24 receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local and surrounding areas. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs two full-time and five part-time staff. Three of the staff, hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children remain in good health because the pre-school follows current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through the daily routine, which includes hand washing after taking part in all messy activities and before food. They independently visit the toilet and systems are in place to enable them to reach the sink and handtowels. Staff monitor the youngest children to ensure they require no assistance. A clear procedure is in place for those in nappies and potties are also provided and cleaned very regularly to prevent any cross infection. Independence is encouraged and children put on their own coats and jackets and also try to put on the dressing up clothes unaided. Clear procedures are in place for recording accidents and medication, although minor amendments are required to the medication records.

Children learn about healthy foods through their topics and through the foods provided at snack times. Parents are issued with guidance on what to put in children's lunch boxes to ensure they have a balanced healthy meal. Staff encourage children to eat their savoury foods before their sweet foods at lunch time. Parents assist at most sessions with the preparation of the snack for the children, cutting up fruit, cooking crumpets or toast, preparing vegetable sticks, and the children sit in groups with a staff member to eat their snack, making it a very social occasion. Children take it in turns to serve the others at the table and those having water have the opportunity to pour their own drinks. Milk is supplied in small cartons with straws. Water is available for the children throughout every session.

Children benefit from a wide range of physical activities both inside and outside, enabling them to develop their skills and control over their body movements. During the inspection the outdoor area was used well as an extension to the indoor environment. Children were supplied with an assortment of cameras, binoculars and magnifiers and an assortment of plastic insects were hidden for them to find. Some took great pleasure in discovering real insects as well, and one child had a ladybird on her hands for some time whilst others came and looked at it before it flew away. This generated much conversation. An assortment of playhouses, slides, seesaws, bikes and balls are also available for the children to use in the garden. Plans show they have music and movement sessions on a regular basis in the hall.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The child-centred environment, supported by the clear procedures and documentation ensure children are safe and well looked after. Daily risk assessments to the environment, both inside and outside, ensure the area is as safe as possible for the children. The room is well laid out, with specific areas for messy play, number, writing and role play, together with a comfortable book area situated at one end of the room on the stage. The stage is well used by the children with its low height and very accessible wide steps minimising the hazard. Children have access to a wide selection of toys and equipment. These are pre-selected each session by staff on a four week rota, but if a child asks for something specific, providing there is room, this is provided. The storage facilities mean the group are unable to offer free selection of equipment but give as wide a choice as possible, with the writing table offering a wide range of resources every session. Staff check all toys and equipment for safety before allowing the children to use them.

Very clear safety procedures are in place at the beginning and end of each session to ensure children's safety, and people arriving during the session are monitored via a window overlooking the front door, before the door is opened. Fire practices are not held very regularly and staff do not ensure all children experience regular fire evacuations. All practices are clearly recorded in a log book. The outdoor play area goes all round the building, staff decide which areas they will be using, either the playground or the grass and position themselves appropriately to keep children within the same area. A very clear and comprehensive child protection policy, fully understood by staff, ensures children's well-being and care is maintained at all times.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages have their needs well met through the activities and experiences provided. All the staff have embraced both the Birth to three matters framework and the Foundation stage curriculum. The youngest two year old children have a session once a week devoted to them with a high ratio of staff and only eight children. This session is used to prepare children for moving into the main pre-school group and many of the activities provided are similar to those which they will find in the main session. This is valued both by staff and parents, as it helps the children to get to know the staff team and to not feel daunted when they move into the larger group.

Clear planning of all the sessions ensures a good and interesting variety of activities available, which assist children to develop their skills and understanding in all areas. Children benefit from free play and the support given by staff. Some children were involved in a complex role play involving the dressing up shop and the car box. A member of staff was playing alongside the children as they got dressed up in some of the clothes and then went on journeys in the car to the seaside and ballet, exhibiting very good imaginative skills for children under the age of three years. Very good interaction between the staff and children, in all sessions, enables the children's understanding and skills to be developed and stretched, through suitable open-ended questioning and conversations with the children. All children under three have clear assessment records based on observations during sessions and clearly linked to the Birth to three framework, showing how the children are progressing.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are very actively involved in their learning and experience a varied, stimulating, topic based curriculum. They are confident and self-select the activities they want to do throughout the session, some peer friendship groups are beginning to emerge. Children receive a lot of very good support from the staff team, who effectively develop their knowledge and understanding in all areas. One small group of children were engaged in a matching game with a set of playing cards. This game was being played at different levels according to the age and ability of the children present. They were sorting the cards by suit, number or picture. Good interaction and support from the staff member enabled the children to decide where to place their card.

Planning is clearly linked to both Birth to three matters and the Foundation stage curriculum. Daily activities are set out on a four week rotational basis, although children can request additional activities. Good use is made of the two role play areas, one of which varies according to the topic. The pre-school had just begun a new topic on senses and they had a dressing up shop available for the children, enabling them to describe and feel a wide variety of textures and then use the costumes in their play. Staff identify the areas of learning they want to cover

within the topic and together discuss how this can be achieved through the variety of activities available. This ensures staff all know how to encourage children's individual development through good quality discussions and open ended questions. Throughout the week some focus activities are included. These identify specific aims, closely linked to the stepping stones and generally for a targeted group of children. A clear evaluation is carried out of both these activities and the daily programme. These evaluations, together with observational records and saved evidence of children's work, create detailed assessment profiles for every child and enable staff to clearly plan for the next steps of learning for individual children.

Children learn through a variety of whole group times and free-play, enabling them to explore the entire curriculum. They are confident with many having made friendship groups with their peers. Children have an excellent relationship with the staff, and are beginning to extend their concentration and imaginative skills. Two children in the home corner successfully negotiated who was playing which role within the home and then set about acting out their role play, involving others at various times.

Children are all very happy and settled with most able to communicate very well. Throughout the session new descriptive words are introduced to the children to extend their vocabulary. They can link sounds to letters and words, and some are able to identify rhymes. Many opportunities for children to practice their writing skills in a play situation are available and some of the older children can write letters and are beginning to write their own names. They have a wide variety of resources available for mark making, including pens, pencils, crayons and paint using various thicknesses of brushes. Children demonstrate the ability to count, taking it in turns to count the number of children present, and counting the number of bugs they found in the grass, together with many opportunities for shape recognition, although less emphasis is placed on early calculation and problem solving.

Through their topics, children learn of other cultures, religions and countries in a very practical way. Their technological skills are developed through the use of tills and dummy computer keyboards in the role play areas and the use of a computer with suitable programmes that supports their learning.

Good use is made of the outdoor area, with children currently helping to prepare a patch of land into which they are going to plant a variety of vegetables. The children explained how they had dug the soil and some spoke of the sorts of things they were going to plant and demonstrated they had an understanding of planting seeds and nurturing them. Children have many opportunities to enjoy singing and musical activities and are offered a wide variety of different creative challenges within their art and craft.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are all fully included and feel a strong sense of belonging to the pre-school. To ensure children's individual needs are well met, staff work very closely with the parents. They learn about other countries and traditions through the range of equipment, posters and topics available to them. Children integrate well together and are beginning to demonstrate an ability to share and take turns, especially when playing games or sharing equipment like the magnifying glasses.

Children with any form of learning difficulty or disability are welcomed and fully included into the group, as are children with English as a second language. Children behave very well and

even the youngest children quickly learn the routines of the group. The high ratio of staff to children maintained by this group, enables staff to quickly diffuse potential conflict situations. Children greatly enjoy being the 'special helper' for the day and all are very good at helping to tidy up effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is good. Children greatly benefit from the good relationship and daily discussions staff have with parents, together with the gentle introduction to the pre-school of the youngest children. The voluntary managements committee of parents work closely with the staff to assist in the positive development of the group. Clear information is provided for parents, which includes an informative termly newsletter, and they have regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress and see their assessment records.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children enjoy the child-centred, inviting and friendly atmosphere. The clear policies and procedures underpin the care and education provided and are fully understood by all members of the staff team. Staff attend a good selection of training courses and the consistency of care and staff's impact on the children is monitored through regular appraisals, which include peer observations. The registration system enables staff to mark children in and out of the session, however, no additional times are recorded for those arriving late or leaving early.

Leadership and management are good. Children make good progress during sessions in this well-planned pre-school, and are happy and secure. The play leader monitors the areas of learning covered to ensure children experience a good cross section of activities each session and that there is something available both to stimulate and challenge them. The staff work closely as a team when planning the curriculum and activities, evaluating sessions, changing and making improvements as they go along. The committee ably support the work of the staff team in a very positive way

and ensure a regular informative appraisal system operates.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection against the National Standards, the group were asked to ensure all records carried the required signatures and details of how to contact Ofsted are displayed at all times. They have reviewed their record keeping and obtained forms for medication, although these have no space for parents to sign after their child has been given medication. Contact details for Ofsted are clearly displayed in the entrance hall.

At the last inspection of funded Nursery education, the group were asked to increase staff's knowledge of the stepping stones, ensure plans cover all aspects of learning and develop overall evaluations. All these areas have been addressed, some very successfully. Staff now have a much greater understanding of all the stepping stones and make clear effective evaluations, although the area of early mathematical calculation requires further development.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

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 good.

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 parents countersign after medication has been administered
- ensure all children experience regular fire practices
- ensure the register identifies clearly when children are not present for the whole session.

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 further opportunities for children to use early calculation skills.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk