



Brixington Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY333658
Inspection date	28 September 2006
Inspector	Anne Legge
Setting Address	Knappe Cross Community Centre, Brixington Lane, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 5DL
Telephone number	01395 269765
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Registered person	Pre-School Learning Alliance
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

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?

Brixington Pre-school is managed by the Pre-School Learning Alliance. It opened in 1973 and has since re-registered twice. The group opened in its current premises in April 2006. The pre-school is registered to care for up to 26 children, aged from three to under five years, and operates from a community hall in Brixington. Morning sessions are from 09:15 to 11:45 on weekdays in term time. There is a lunch club from 11:45 to 13:00 and afternoon sessions are held on Thursdays and Fridays from 13:00 to 15:30. There are currently 38 children on roll, including 37 funded three- and four-year olds. The pre-school welcomes and supports children with learning difficulties. Nine staff work with the children, five of whom have appropriate early years qualifications. The group is part of a quality assurance scheme and receives support from the Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children benefit from healthy eating, as they enjoy a wide range of nutritious snacks. They eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, as well as cheese, crackers and breadsticks. At lunch club, they enjoy balanced meals, supplied by parents, and staff promote healthy eating by encouraging all parents to include fruit and healthy items. Children have plenty of fluids, as drinking water is always available, and a variety of drinks is offered at snack time. All special dietary needs are known, recorded and very carefully met. Children have daily opportunities to be physically active. Good use is made of the outdoor area, which is used extensively in all weathers. Children play on climbing equipment, or enjoy ball games. They ride wheeled toys and skilfully avoid obstacles. In summer, they have free access to the outside play area and many daily activities take place outdoors, so that children have good opportunities to enjoy the fresh air.

Children are very well protected from infection, due to the staff's comprehensive systems for ensuring that all surfaces are spotless and that the premises are hygienic. Staff check and clean toilets, floors and the kitchen before, during and after sessions. They wash tables thoroughly, before children eat snacks and meals. Children learn excellent hygiene routines, as staff remind them to wash their hands appropriately, and older children do so spontaneously. Their needs are very well met when they are unwell or injured. Staff are consistently very caring, when children have minor accidents, and all records of accidents and medication are comprehensive. Almost all staff have current First Aid qualifications.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children play in an extremely safe and well-managed environment. Their security is assured, as the outdoor area is completely enclosed and two padlocks are fitted to the gate, during sessions. The entrance to the building is also locked, and access is carefully monitored, using a bell system. Children move around safely in the spacious hall. Furniture and resources are arranged very carefully, so that children can access toys and activities easily, but are not encouraged to run around indoors. They choose from an excellent range of toys and resources, which are in very good condition. There are comprehensive systems for checking all equipment regularly, to ensure that children can always use it safely.

Children's safety is given a very high priority at the pre-school. Staff have an excellent understanding of all safety issues and they successfully protect children, using well-established systems for risk assessing the premises, all activities and equipment regularly. Hazards are addressed immediately, such as by replacing bolts on the climbing frame, or adjusting a loose toilet seat. Children learn to manage their own safety, as staff teach them how to use tools, such as hammers or knives, safely, and closely supervise them while they practise. Children are very safe in emergencies, as evacuation procedures are practised regularly and all children know what to do. Fire safety equipment is serviced regularly. Children have excellent protection from abuse or neglect, as all staff undertake regular child protection training and fully understand the issues and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy an excellent variety of activities, using a wide range of resources. They settle happily and become confident, independent learners, moving freely and enthusiastically between activities. Sessions are carefully planned, to provide a very good variety of play experiences, which enable all children to make good progress. The youngest children attend with their parents until they are settled, and many are also helped to integrate, by attending a twice-weekly toddler group in the same premises, which is run by pre-school staff. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively, to support the learning of very young children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding aspects. Staff plan lively and interesting topics, such as 'Science' and 'People who help us', ensuring that the whole curriculum is covered over time. There are excellent systems for observing children's achievements and for tracking their progress toward the early learning goals. Assessment information is used very effectively in planning to meet children's individual learning needs, by addressing their personal targets for development. This ensures that all children are challenged or supported appropriately and make very good progress overall. Staff have a very clear understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and interact skilfully with children, using questions and discussion effectively, to promote learning. Sessions include plenty of free play and independent choice for children, as well as a variety of adult-led activities, which are mainly well organised. Some large group sessions are too long for the youngest children, who sometimes become restless and reduce the impact of good teaching on the progress of the most able children.

Children enjoy sharing stories and learning about letter sounds, as they discuss the letters of the week. They recognise and begin to write their names, developing their literacy skills in a wide range of carefully planned practical activities. They write for different purposes, such as when making cards or writing lists, using the excellent resources, which are freely available. Children count constantly throughout sessions, and make outstanding progress in understanding number patterns, as staff skilfully challenge them to compare groups of turtles, or to find different ways of making the number of the week. They play with shapes, knowledgeably discussing their names and features.

Children explore and investigate, using an excellent range of materials and resources. For example, they mix oil, sand and water in plastic bottles, then watch how they separate. They look closely at different toys, such as water games, as staff help them to consider how things work. Children develop a very good sense of time, as staff explain the daily routine, using visual prompts, and discuss dates and seasons. They have excellent opportunities to develop their creativity, using an extensive variety of craft resources and materials. For example, they make collages, using feathers, buttons, tinsel, corrugated card and different fabrics. They paint freely, enjoying using their hands and arms as part of the experience. They dress up and engage in imaginative role play, which is very well supported and extended by staff. Children enjoy singing familiar songs and using musical instruments, to explore sounds and rhythms. They develop

very good co-ordination, as they use small equipment, such as scissors and glue-spreaders, or large equipment, including tricycles and a climbing frame, with increasing skill.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The pre-school has an excellent ethos of valuing all children and their families, and meeting the individual needs of each child. Staff ensure that they know parents and children very well, and that all differences are celebrated. For example, the individual needs of twins are fully respected and separately addressed. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. There is a strong emphasis on helping children to develop their social skills and to understand and respect each other's needs. Staff skilfully teach them to find ways to share toys and resources, and effectively explain the feelings and needs of others. Children respond to the staff's calm, affectionate and consistent handling of their behaviour, including regular references to having 'kind hands and feet'. They enjoy extensive praise and encouragement, and readily conform to the daily routines and high expectations set by staff.

Children learn about cultural differences, as they play with excellent resources, such as multi-cultural dolls and dressing-up clothes, or try foods from different parts of the world. Children with learning difficulties are very well supported and included. Staff have comprehensive systems for monitoring children with possible additional needs, and for working with parents and outside agencies to address all needs.

The pre-school's partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents feel very well informed and fully able to support their child's development, due to the group's excellent communication systems. Parents usually attend with their child initially, so are familiar with the routine. Staff provide detailed information about the curriculum, and about policies and procedures, in newsletters and on a notice-board. The letters, colour, number and shape of the week are also clearly displayed for parents and children, to enable parents to be involved in learning. Each child has a home book, where staff record details of daily activities enjoyed by the child, and parents can also share information about progress at home or any other relevant issues. There are regular meetings between staff and parents, when children's progress records are shared and targets for future learning are agreed. Parents appreciate the staff's excellent commitment to meeting children's needs and the exemplary systems, which enable them to contribute effectively to their child's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. Children benefit from the clear and effective management structure of the pre-school. The Pre-school Learning Alliance delegates the daily running of the setting to a skilled and committed senior staff team, who carefully monitor the quality of provision and seek to constantly improve standards of care and education. The group is involved in a quality assurance scheme, and has effective systems for supporting staff, through appraisals, peer observations and training opportunities.

Children are cared for by a competent staff team, who are committed to constantly developing their skills, through relevant training. They enjoy the facilities of spacious premises, which are clean, exceptionally safe and very well organised, to provide an excellent range of activities. Sessions are planned efficiently, to make good use of time and resources, and children make very good progress in almost all activities. The pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Children's welfare is securely underpinned by mainly comprehensive documentation, which is regularly updated by the manager. However, the child protection policy is ambiguous regarding procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation against staff or volunteers, and the complaints procedure lacks information about recent changes to regulations.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last Nursery Education inspection, staff have significantly improved the challenges planned for the most able children, especially in mathematics and literacy. All children now make excellent progress in their understanding of letter sounds and number patterns. Assessment systems have been very effectively developed, so that each child's progress can be clearly tracked, and appropriate targets are set for the next steps in their learning. These changes have successfully enhanced the quality of provision for all children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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):

- make sure that children's welfare is always supported by current and comprehensive documentation, including up-to-date complaints procedures, and a child protection

policy which clearly explains procedures to be followed if an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer.

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):

- improve the organisation of large-group activities, to ensure that children of different ages or abilities are always able to contribute and make good progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk