



## **Brookhurst Pre-School Group "Stepping Stones"**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	306501
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 October 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Elizabeth Margaret Grocott
<b>Setting Address</b>	Brookhurst Road, Bromborough, Wirral, Merseyside, CH63 0EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	07790 761 564
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Brookhurst Pre-School Management Committee
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional 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](http://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?

Brookhurst Pre-School has been registered since 1986, and is run by a community-based committee as a charity providing registered childcare. The pre-school has the sole use of a mobile unit sited in the grounds of Brookhurst Primary School, in the residential area of Bromborough on the Wirral peninsular. The setting serves the local area and a maximum of 20 children under five years may attend at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and 13.00 to 15.30 in term time only. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 40 children on roll. Of these, 31 children receive funding for early education. The group currently supports children who have learning difficulties or disabilities and children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight staff who work on a full and part-time basis. Of these, all hold appropriate early years qualifications or are working towards one. The setting receives support from an Early Years advisory teacher.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children's health is fostered well. They are cared for in a clean and well-maintained environment where there are appropriate facilities for their personal hygiene needs. Children begin to learn how to manage their own hygiene needs independently and they understand why this is important. For example, children say that they must wash their hands before eating because there might be germs on them. Most children wash their hands after using the toilet independently without prompting from staff, and those that need assistance are given appropriate support. Children use separate hand towels after washing their hands, minimising the chances of cross contamination. The setting promotes children's health by recognising and reducing possible risks. Staff take steps to prevent the spread of infection by keeping the premises and furnishings clean, wiping tables with antibacterial cleaner between activities and having a clear exclusion policy for sick children. Children are protected from the effects of the sun because the setting provides suitable hats for them to wear when playing outside in hot weather.

Children enjoy the social aspect of snack time. They are able to decide for themselves when they are hungry, and can usually sit down and enjoy a snack at a time convenient to them, as there is a free flow snack system in operation. They sit in friend groups, chat socially whilst eating and drinking, and get a 'special' cloth afterwards to clean the table where they have been sitting. Children benefit from the provision of a healthy range of fresh fruits and either milk or water to drink. Processed foods are not served. Children access drinks freely, during the snack time as staff set out a tray with cups so that children can help themselves. Staff are aware of each child's individual dietary needs and ensure that these are met.

Children enjoy daily opportunities to exercise energetically both outside and indoors. They learn physical control and co-ordination when using the tricycles and scooters and develop their imagination as they play in the playhouse. Indoors they dance and do actions and movement to music.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children benefit from playing in a well-organised environment that allows them to move around and play safely. All areas are kept clean and well maintained helping to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the children. They have a sense of belonging as their work is attractively displayed, meaning the surroundings are appealing to children and their families. There is an inviting quiet area with books and a small sofa where children can sit and play quietly should they wish to do so.

Children use a range of good quality, safe and suitable resources. They access the materials easily from attractive display units. These support enjoyable activities that stimulate and challenge in ways appropriate to the needs of the children attending. Priority is given to the condition and safety of equipment. Children benefit from access to a good range of resources covering all areas of development. There is effective storage both inside and outside the premises. Toys are rotated and stored at low level to encourage freedom of choice.

Children benefit from the setting's close attention to safety and security. There are regular risk assessments, fully documented, that identify potential hazards and appropriate steps are taken to reduce risks to children. Children learn about fire safety; they know the procedures for evacuation and the provider regularly practises this with them. The setting ensures that equipment, such as fire extinguishers are provided and these are regularly checked to ensure that they are in good working order. The setting's attention to security means children cannot leave unnoticed. The outdoor area is fully enclosed and children are closely supervised at all times.

The child protection policy contains all of the required information, and most staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and know what action to take should they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures they quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in their best interests. However, new staff members are not familiar with the policy relating to child protection.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children come into the setting happily and confidently. They relate well to staff, and confidently approach them for support indicating trusting relationships are built. Children enjoy and learn from a good range of activities and experiences on offer during each session that helps to encourage their learning and development. There is a busy atmosphere throughout the session, and children watch intently and with great pleasure when the visiting parrot does some tricks. He rides a scooter, plays basketball and selects various foodstuffs to put in his own little trolley.

Children are very sociable and articulate. They are keen and eager to participate in the activities and experiences on offer, and spend time concentrating on self-chosen activities. They are not forced to participate in planned activities, making the sessions very relaxed. Children choose what they want to do which helps to increase their enjoyment and potential. Staff are enthusiastic and spend time playing with children, helping them to develop new skills and make progress in their learning. They increase children's self-esteem by the regular use of positive interaction and use effective questioning in order to promote children's learning and development.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as the activities and experiences on offer cover all of the areas of learning on a daily basis. The planning is detailed and works well in practice. Although staff discuss how activities have gone, there is no written evaluation included in the planning. Staff have a good

knowledge of the Foundation Stage, and are able to link observations immediately to specific stepping stones. Activities are planned, although children are not forced to complete them as they are often engaged in the other activities, experiences and equipment on offer. Staff monitor this to ensure that all children have opportunities to take part. Children concentrate very well and show sustained interest in many of the activities for significant periods of time. For example, one child sits concentrating at the computer for 25 minutes playing a matching game. At circle time, children confidently talk about the 'treasure' that they have brought to share with the rest of the group. They help each other to fasten clothes in role play and effectively take turns when playing 'snap'.

Staff know the children well as they complete daily observations of them during their play. Staff know where children are in their development without having to refer to their written records. This helps them to plan the next steps in children's learning generally, although the planning does not include written evidence to identify how staff differentiate activities for more or less able children, or how assessment informs planning.

Children are very independent. They go to the toilet on their own and decide for themselves when they would like their snack. They help to clear up after activities and are encouraged to work together. Children are curious about the things around them and ask questions. For example, 'what the parrot eats, where he sleeps if he can fly, and will he bite?'. Staff respond to children's interests, and support children's learning in all areas. They ask open-ended questions, and never miss an opportunity to extend their learning. Some children take an independent interest in books and take themselves into the book corner to select books to 'read'. Many children write their own names independently and there are plenty of opportunities to use mark-making materials throughout the sessions. Children make good use of the book corner either alone or when sharing a story with a staff member or peer.

Children learn the meaning of numbers as they count the number of children in the group and through number games and rhyming songs. The child who brings the train, as his 'treasure' is asked how many wheels he has on his train and whether they are all the same size. Children have a good grasp of mathematical concepts, such as shape and size as they make pictures with different lengths of pasta. Children count each other in a group and most count to 10 and beyond, one very young child counts to 25. Good opportunities are created during snack time for children to begin to understand the early concept of addition and subtraction.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world and social diversity in a variety of ways. They participate in themed activities based on countries around the world and the customs within them. For example, children explore the traditions of Spain and France through music, dance, craft and role play. Children find out about aspects of the natural world as they follow the life cycle of animals, such as watching eggs hatch and have chicks to visit. A computer is available for daily use so that children can learn about technology. They enjoy using the computer programs and are skilled in manoeuvring the mouse. Children enjoy programmable toys, such as 'Be Bop' helping them to learn about technology. They develop fine motor skills as they use small construction equipment and work safely with scissors, simple tools, small world figures and gloop, all of which helps their development.

Children show pride in their achievements. They engage each other in discussion during role play and enjoy moving to music, some with interesting cultural influences, and use musical instruments. Children use a variety of media to produce 2-D and 3-D artwork and construct models from linking and stacking resources.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children feel welcome in the pre-school because staff create positive relationships with them and their parents. Staff care for children, meeting their needs well, which contributes to children feeling settled and secure. Children develop confidence and independence, because they are given many opportunities to take care of their personal needs at snack time, toilet times and during their play. They enjoy and benefit from celebrating a range of festivals and cultures throughout the year as they learn about diversity in society. Topics including 'The Open' golf championship, helps children to learn about the wider world. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The designated special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role and responsibility and works closely with parents to ensure the group is able to cater for children's individual requirements. Some staff learn sign language and share this with children to broaden their experiences.

Children behave extremely well. They are kind to each other and respectful of staff's wishes. They understand the boundaries and staff's expectations of them. Staff are good role models, and are patient and calm with high expectations of children's positive responses.

Partnership with parents is good. Parental feedback about the service is very positive. Parents receive clear and comprehensive initial information about the setting and have easy access to the full range of policies and procedures. Regular newsletters include details of forthcoming activities and themes. Parents are invited to join sessions on a regular basis and share any skills that they may have. They are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning at home, by extending the themes from pre-school, under the guidance of staff. Children benefit from the consistent approach to their care achieved through an understanding of their home life and personal needs gained from discussion with parents. Parents can approach staff at any time to discuss their child's progress, and there are formal systems for ensuring that parents receive regular information about children's achievements and development.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Children benefit from being cared for by well-qualified and experienced staff. The setting places a high priority on staff development and training. Staff understand their individual roles and responsibilities and are fully involved in the planning process. This ensures that those who know the children best are part of the process. Staff ratios ensure that children are very well supported in their activities and that they have regular opportunities to interact with the staff to develop their learning.

Children benefit from an extremely well organised environment where staff are appropriately deployed which helps to ensure children are well supervised and safe. The organisation of the space, time, activities and resources are all very effective helping to create a fluent and seamless environment where the children can enjoy themselves.

Leadership and management of the setting is good. Clear aims reflect a commitment to improving the quality of care and education, and staff assess their own practice regularly through parent questionnaires and an appraisal system, which helps to secure future improvement. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme and offer consistency of care. They share a desire to improve the quality of care they offer to children.

All mandatory records are in place, are confidential and well maintained. This helps ensure the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection, the provider was asked to amend the child protection policy to include the procedure to be followed if an allegation was made against a staff member. They were also asked to build on the visual images, that they already had, which promote equality of opportunity, including disability.

The setting has continued to build their resources, reflecting diversity so that children learn about the wider world through the provision of topics, celebrations, books, posters and small world play. The child protection policy has been updated and covers all the aspects required.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider agreed to produce an action plan to develop the planning to include more opportunities for children to solve number problems, simple addition and subtraction and develop their awareness of technology.

All six areas are fully covered, meaning children's learning in mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world is maximised.

### **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 that new staff are aware of the policy relating to child protection.

#### **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):

- continue to develop the process for differentiation and identification of next steps in learning for individual children to effectively inform future planning and to complete the observation, assessment and planning cycle.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)