



Busy Bees Day Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123976
Inspection date	31 October 2006
Inspector	Gail Groves
Setting Address	Pinders Lodge Copper Beech Nursery, Hartham, Port Hill, Hertford, Hertfordshire, SG14 1QS
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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

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?

Busy Bees Day Nursery is one of a chain of nurseries run by Busy Bees Nurseries Ltd.

It opened in 1993 and operates from a large, converted house situated in Hertford, Hertfordshire. A maximum of 44 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 07.30 to 18.30 all year round. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 84 children from three months to four years on roll. Of these, nine children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The nursery currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 staff, of whom 11, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from infection and are well taken care of if they have an accident or become ill because staff follow current and appropriate environmental health and hygiene guidelines, policies and procedures. For example, comprehensive systems are in place to ensure that rooms and resources are kept clean and hygienic, tables are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray before children use them to eat their lunch and the carefully devised nappy changing procedures prevent cross infection. Children learn to understand some simple, good health and hygiene practices, such as throwing dirty tissues in the bin when they have wiped their noses and washing their hands after using the toilet or before eating their lunch. However, they are not consistently required to wash their hands before eating their snack and as a result, they are not developing a full understanding of how to stay healthy.

Children enjoy a well planned, varied and interesting diet, which contains a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables. They eat their meals with relish and are encouraged to try a variety of different tastes. Consequently, they are well nourished and develop very good eating habits. Children's health and dietary needs are well met because the nursery works closely with parents. Information about children's allergies and special dietary requirements is sought before children begin to attend and any necessary training to ensure that staff can manage these needs is put into place. For example, a number of staff have received specific training in the administration of medication to counter anaphylactic shock, in order to support children with life threatening allergies. Different coloured serving dishes are used to highlight the meals that are provided for children with particular dietary requirements and staff ensure that the correct meals are given at all times. Children learn about healthy eating and exercise through planned topic work. For example, they take part in a 'Healthy Eating Day', make a collage of foods that are good for their hearts and talk about what their bodies need to stay healthy. They are therefore developing a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Children take part in regular physical activity both indoors and outdoors so that they develop their motor skills and coordination and learn to enjoy exercise. A wide variety of equipment in the outside play areas, such as slides, climbing frames, a roundabout and wheeled toys, help them learn to climb, crawl, run, jump, throw, catch, kick and pedal. Weekly 'Stretch-n-Grow' sessions inside the nursery help them to become more aware of how their muscles and bodies work and move and encourage them to think about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Babies are also fully supported and encouraged to develop good motor skills because staff are very aware of their particular developmental needs and provide the necessary stimulation for them to learn to sit, crawl and walk. Children rest and sleep according to their needs so that they do not become overtired and unable to enjoy the play and learning activities provided. Energetic play is well balanced with less active play and all babies and children who need to sleep have their routines carefully met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming, secure and safe indoor and outdoor environment where many of the risks to their safety have been assessed and minimised. For example, robust and detailed procedures are in place to protect children with food allergies, fire drills are carried out regularly, accident records are analysed each month to identify any particular issues and a safety surface has been laid underneath the climbing frame. They use good quality, suitable and safe equipment which meets their differing needs and are able to access toys and resources independently and safely from low level storage units. Children can move around freely within the different rooms in the nursery because walkways are kept clear so that they do not trip. However, they are potentially at risk of injury when playing outside because they are sometimes allowed to use wheeled toys in the limited play space around the climbing frame. As a result, children using bikes and cars bump into each other and the slides and climbing equipment cannot be safely accessed by the other children.

Children learn to keep themselves safe through some planned topic work as well as through discussions and practical experiences within their daily routine. For example, they take part in 'Road Safety Week', learn about firework safety and enjoy visits from fire fighters and police officers. They discuss with staff why they should not touch a hot oven and remember why only an adult is allowed to use a sharp knife as they hollow out a pumpkin at Halloween. When using the stairs, they learn to hold onto the hand rail and to concentrate on what they are doing so that they do not fall.

Children are safeguarded because they are cared for by adults who are vetted and have the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to keep them safe. Staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They all receive a copy of the comprehensive child protection policy and attend training to ensure that they have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms which would give rise to concerns about a child's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are settled and happy in the setting and show high levels of confidence. They readily make decisions and are engrossed and active in their exploration and investigation of the environment and their toys. Consequently they are able to extend their learning. For example, babies look carefully at themselves in the low level mirrors, crawl across the room to explore a pop up toy or to find and throw a ball and enjoy using chalks to make marks on paper. Toddlers move freely from activity to activity, select their own resources independently and enjoy exploring how they can make marks with their fingers in the sand. Children have access to a broad range of planned activities and spontaneous events, which support their development and learning. Planning is in place following the 'Birth to three matters' framework and is colour coded to link it with the skills and competences the framework identifies.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children show positive attitudes to learning and are eager to try new experiences. They relate well to each other and to staff and clearly understand the rules and routines of the nursery. They take an active part in their own self-care and the good organisation of space and resources ensures that they are able to operate independently within their environment. Children use language confidently and for a variety of purposes. They listen eagerly to stories, join in with repeated phrases in their favourite ones and handle books carefully. Staff make good use of Jolly Phonics to encourage children to begin to link sounds and letters and some are beginning to recognise the initial sound of their names. Children have opportunities to use tools, such as scissors and glue spreaders, in order to develop the motor skills needed for handwriting and practise copying and tracing patterns, shapes and letters to increase their skills still further. However, they do not have regular opportunities to enjoy mark making within their play and so are not developing an understanding of writing for a purpose.

Children enjoy counting and number rhymes and explore ideas of shape, space and measure as they use scales and height charts and play with shape sorters. Opportunities for them to develop calculation and problem solving skills through practical experiences, such as ensuring that there are enough cups or plates for all the children at lunch time are limited. Activities, such as growing flowers and vegetables in the nursery garden as well as visits from the staff and animals from the local wildlife park, encourage children to learn about the world around them and begin to understand how living things grow and survive. An extensive range of science activities, such as making volcanoes with bicarbonate of soda, are particularly well planned.

Children enjoy a wide variety of creative experiences, such as painting, collage, model making and gluing. Weekly music and drama sessions help them to develop their imaginative skills and they respond with enthusiasm to the monthly changes made to the imaginative play area, which may sometimes be a jungle, a vet's practice, a Doctor's surgery or even a laboratory. Their physical skills develop and improve through a variety of carefully planned experiences indoors as well as outside.

Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan the curriculum to promote children's progress towards the early learning goals. However, whilst the long and medium term plans ensure that all six areas of learning are covered, the daily plans do not clearly indicate the learning intention of activities. Consequently, staff cannot ensure that children are having access to activities which encourage their progress through the stepping stones within all of the required aspects of the Foundation Stage. Staff challenge children appropriately and use questions carefully to encourage children to think and make connections in their learning. New systems of record keeping and observation have recently been put into place and staff are beginning to make good use of these to assess children's progress and attainments and to guide their planning and teaching.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and included and feel a strong sense of belonging. Their particular needs are identified and met because there are good systems in place to assess their progress and to provide the appropriate support to encourage their development. Children learn to respond to

high expectations for their behaviour. Staff value politeness and recognise children's efforts and achievements at all times, for example, with verbal praise. Concrete methods of recognising achievements, such as star charts for children learning to use the toilet and 'learning to fly' behaviour charts for older children are also used to good effect. As a result, some of the older children are spontaneously beginning to praise each other's efforts by saying "Well done". Staff support children to share and take turns and encourage them to respect the needs of others. For example, children know that when they walk through areas where other children are sleeping after lunch they must be quiet so that they do not wake them and readily share collage material when they are gluing or bikes when they are playing in the garden.

Children make choices and take decisions throughout their daily routine and have many opportunities to be independent. For example, toddlers choose which cereal they would like for breakfast and decide what they wish to play with. Older children serve themselves to lunch and drinks and help to clear away their own dirty dishes when they have finished eating. Consequently, they are developing high levels of confidence and self-esteem, are learning to work harmoniously together and are developing very good social skills. They benefit from activities and an interesting range of resources which help them value diversity. They play with dolls, puppets and dressing up clothes, which reflect positive images of culture, gender and disability, learn about a wide variety of different religious festivals and taste foods from other cultures. As a result, they are learning to be aware of the positive differences between people. The nursery's positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents share what they know about their children and are kept well informed about their children's achievements and progress both through informal talks with staff as well as through twice yearly parent consultations. Food is provided at these events and this encourages parents to feel welcomed. Their views about the nursery and its provision are regularly sought through questionnaires, their suggestions are acted upon and progress is reported back to them. They are encouraged to be involved with some of their children's learning through the use of week end books in which they help their children to write and draw pictures about the things that they have been doing at home and which children eagerly share with everyone at the beginning of each week. Parents are provided with good quality information about the setting and its provision and plans and daily routines for each of the different age groups of children in the nursery are clearly displayed. However, they are not given sufficient information about the Foundation Stage or how the activities provided by the nursery help children to make progress towards the early learning goals. As a result, parents cannot fully and effectively support and continue their children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff have a high regard for the well-being of all children, a clear sense of purpose and show a commitment to continual improvement. Recruitment and vetting procedures contribute to children being protected and cared for by staff with good knowledge and understanding of child development and induction procedures for new staff are comprehensive. All of the

necessary documentation for the efficient and safe management of the nursery is in place and record keeping systems are carefully organised and used well to meet children's needs. The effective use of time, space and staff deployment contributes significantly to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. The group's policies and procedures generally work in practice to promote all of the outcomes for children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The manager has a clear vision for nursery education and a strong focus on the personal development and achievement of all children. Annual staff appraisals are held to support staff and identify training issues and the senior staff team monitor planning and record keeping in order to ensure that standards are maintained. Activities are regularly evaluated by staff and their good use of the assessments of children's progress enables them to accurately assess the strengths and weaknesses of the provision for children's learning. The nursery is fully committed to improving the care and education it provides for all its children.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery agreed to ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate was on the premises or on outings at any one time and that designated staff had suitable training relating to child protection. Most of the sixteen staff now hold current first aid certificates and those who do not are booked onto courses to be held in the near future. The manager of the nursery and the designated person for child protection have now both attended relevant training courses and have a clear understanding of the issues involved. As a result, children's health and welfare are now more fully protected. The nursery also agreed to improve children's safety by ensuring that the bathroom window on the first floor was made safe. They have now fitted a catch so that children cannot open the window far enough to fall through.

Issues identified for improvement following the last inspection of nursery education were the nursery's planning and assessment systems and the organisation of activities. Staff now ensure that resources are readily available for children to access from low storage units and periods of free play are timetabled into the daily plans so that children can make choices about their play and operate independently. Regular observations and assessments of children's progress using a tracker system are now carried out so that staff can clearly identify children's attainments and plan for the next stage in their learning. The nursery's written plans have been reviewed and whilst they now clearly identify the area of learning being covered by each activity they do not yet show in sufficient detail what the planned learning outcome is to be. As a result, children's learning cannot always be fully and effectively supported.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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 the hygiene routines which require children to wash their hands before eating are consistently carried out
- review the safety procedures with regard to children riding wheeled toys in the outside play area.

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):

- ensure that the short term plans show the learning intentions of activities
- increase the opportunities for children to experience mark making and calculation
- improve the information given to parents regarding the Foundation Stage and how the activities provided by the nursery help children make progress towards the early learning goals.

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