



## **Busy Bees Day Nursery**

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123606
<b>Inspection date</b>	07 February 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Hilary Preece
<b>Setting Address</b>	Rothamsted Lodge, Hatching Green, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 462533
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<b>Registered person</b>	Busy Bees Nurseries Ltd
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Busy Bees Day Nursery opened in 1993. It operates from two floors of a large building and is situated in Hatching Green, in a quiet woodland setting on the edge of Harpenden. Children have access to a secure area for outside play. The nursery serves the local and wider area. It is open each weekday from 07:15 to 18:30 all year round.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 70 children at any one time. There are currently 72 children from three months to five years on roll. Of these, 14 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting can support children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 14 members of staff, most of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are healthy and active. They learn about healthy living through routines and activities that develop their awareness of the importance of a good diet, regular exercise and managing personal hygiene. Children have very hearty appetites and enjoy the nutritious, freshly prepared meals and snacks. Older children know that fruit and vegetables are good for their health and teeth. Children's individual dietary needs are met well as the nursery follows a strict colour-coded system that ensures they eat appropriate foods and staff are trained to deal with severe allergic reactions. Children always have access to a named water container and are offered drinks on waking. Children understand simple hygiene practices, such as washing their hands before eating.

Children stay healthy because staff follow some sound environmental health and hygiene guidelines that protect children from the risk of infection and cross-contamination. Staff follow strict cleaning procedures to ensure resources are disinfected, they wear disposable gloves and aprons when changing nappies and are very careful to wash their hands after cleaning children's faces. Similarly, staff pay careful attention to health procedures. They operate a clear sickness policy that excludes sick children to prevent the spread of infections within the nursery, and adhere to accident and medication procedures.

Children enjoy regular physical activity, both in a safe indoor environment and outside in the fresh air. They take part in a varied range of physical activity that promotes their co-ordination, muscle strength and general well-being. Babies have space to crawl and use equipment to support their sitting or standing, as well as their own outside area. Young children enjoy crawling through tunnels and over large floor cushions in the sensory room. Older children burn off energy in their garden area and use resources that allow them to develop confidence in climbing and riding tricycles. They take part in regular 'stretch and grow' sessions that develop their confidence in movement and teach awareness of general bodily health, and learn some basic ball skills from a visiting soccer coach. Children rest and sleep according to their individual needs and this is fully discussed and agreed with parents.

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

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment where steps have been taken to minimise risks. The nursery follows strict policies and procedures that promote children's safety and security. These include regular risk assessments, fire drills, close monitoring of visitors and regular head counts as children move about the premises. Children have space to move about safely and with confidence in their rooms and outside. They learn how to keep themselves safe as staff reinforce how to manage the stairs and play in the sand safely, and point out the risk of touching hot cooking trays.

Children use a generally good range of safe and age-appropriate resources and equipment that are regularly cleaned and checked for safety. Children can access the resources easily from low-level storage units, thus encouraging them to be independent and make choices in their play. Babies' interest is developed by some colourful and stimulating resources and children react with wonder at the new sensory room. Twinkling lights on the ceiling, mirrors and musical toys provoke interest and stimulate their senses.

Children are safeguarded by staff's sound knowledge and understanding of child protection procedures. Staff understand their responsibilities in following these procedures and the company child protection policy is regularly re-assessed at staff meetings. This ensures that staff remain vigilant and give priority to children's welfare.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and young children have their individual needs met as their care routines are discussed with parents and their wishes respected. Most separate confidently from their parents and carers, respond warmly to staff and are happy and settled within their rooms. Those that need additional support to settle are comforted by staff who recognise their needs.

Younger children have activities planned for them that reflect the 'Birth to three matters' framework and most staff have a sound understanding of this. However, some of the two-year-old children are following the Foundation Stage curriculum that is not appropriate to their stage of development and does not link with the assessment tracker books that are in use for this age group. This means that children become bored with some activities as they are beyond their understanding. There is a system for assessing children's development and progress but observations of children and evaluations of activities are not consistently carried out so cannot be used effectively to plan the next steps of children's learning.

Babies explore their surroundings with interest. Appropriate equipment enables them to sit with support, crawl and develop their early walking skills so that they become confident. Babies enthusiastically explore musical instruments and tactile toys that stimulate their senses. Young children explore the texture of corn flour, ice, dry cereal and the feel of paint on their feet during messy play activities. Children become confident and independent in their play. There is a balance between structured activities and time to make independent choices. Children show a positive interest in what they do. They squeal with delight as paint is squirted into trays ready for a printing activity and are mesmerised when watching others blow bubbles into paint. Children become confident communicators as staff listen to what they say, ask questions and model good language to extend their vocabulary and understanding. They enjoy sharing stories and join in with action rhymes and songs.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pre-school has undergone some changes in recent times that has meant planning and assessment has been inconsistent. New staff have enthusiasm and sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum but have not been in post long enough to develop the teaching. This has been recognised by the nursery and there

are plans to employ a qualified early years teacher to build on the team. Children's progress towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning is steady and they display many of the basic skills required for future learning. Staff use a sufficient range of teaching strategies to engage children in learning and to manage their behaviour, though some staff are less confident than others. Staff challenge groups of children with careful questioning during activities but this is not included in the written planning so it is not clear how all children are included and receive appropriate challenge or support to meet their individual needs. The learning environment is sufficiently equipped and planned to allow children to be independent. However, some resources to support children's learning and develop their curiosity lack interest, stimulation and some are not readily available. For example, the outside area lacks facilities for the children to explore the natural world, and children do not generally choose to access the writing area or role play areas.

Children are confident and happy in the pre-school. They receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff to develop their self-esteem. They settle quickly, are keen to learn and remain focused during adult-led activities, such as threading shapes onto laces, bubble painting and sharing information books about spiders. Some children, particularly those that are more able, are less engaged in play and learning at other times as resources do not stimulate or capture their interest. Children show growing independence. They exercise very good control when serving their own food at lunch time and help to lay and clear the tables. They wash their hands independently as good facilities are provided within the room.

Children have opportunities to listen to music, play instruments and sing songs. They engage in imaginative play in the garden and express their ideas through a range of media including sand, water, paint and dough. They enjoy making collage pictures but can only access resources set out by staff, thus limiting their imagination. Children count, use mathematical language and show a good understanding of shape during their play. However, there are limited opportunities to reinforce simple calculation during everyday routines, such as at register time and snack time, and children cannot access maths resources themselves to help them explore and consolidate their understanding.

Children enjoy stories. They listen well and respond appropriately by recalling and predicting events. They speak clearly and confidently about what they are doing and to converse with each other in play. Children benefit from a weekly French session and confidently say hello in French and correctly translate colours from French to English. Children are beginning to link sounds to letters by recognising the initial sounds of their names but again, daily opportunities to incorporate this in their play are missed. Children develop good hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills through threading, cutting, manipulating dough and pouring sand. This is important for their emerging writing. Some children write their name on their pictures but there are few opportunities to write for different purposes in their role play. Children read their name labels and those of their friends on their drawers. Children develop a sense of time and place as they talk about their homes and families and become aware of their local community when making visits to the nearby fire station and park. They investigate the frost and ice on the ground and understand that the sun is making it melt. They have fewer opportunities to investigate how technology works as resources are restricted. Previously, children have used the computer to explore paint programmes but this is currently broken.

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

The provision is good.

Children develop a good understanding of diversity and awareness of the needs of others. They take part in some interesting activities, such as welcoming visitors to the nursery to learn about the Diwali festival and having their own carnival to reflect the festivities of the Notting Hill Carnival in London. Their awareness of the wider society is supported by posters, displays and resources that promote positive images. Children feel a sense of belonging to the setting. They have their own named pegs and drawers, birthdays are celebrated and they have a 'graduation' celebration when they leave to go to school. This shows that children are valued as individuals. Babies develop a sense of who they are as they begin to recognise and respond to their image in mirrors. There are sound procedures in place to ensure that children with learning difficulties, disabilities or those who speak English as an additional language receive the support they need.

Children are beginning to learn right from wrong as staff act as good role models for positive behaviour. They are reminded to be polite, well-mannered and kind to their friends. Staff use appropriate strategies to manage unwanted behaviour. For example, they understand the reasons why some children bite and specific support is put in place to manage such behaviour and work with parents. There are clear company procedures to deal with such situations and these are followed by staff. Children respond well to boundaries for their behaviour when these are explained to them but behaviour can deteriorate at times when children are not supervised closely or staff are less familiar with the children. Children have opportunities to reflect quietly and enjoy social occasions of sitting together for meals with staff. Music is used to create a calm atmosphere when eating and when children are resting. Thus, the setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. Children are cared for according to their parents' wishes and there is a good settling in process to help children feel secure and reassure parents. Staff obtain information from parents about what their children can do when they start and use this to help plan their care routines and activities. Parents receive sufficient information via the notice boards and newsletters about topics and planning. They are less well-informed about the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, which means they are not fully involved in their children's learning and development. Parents have opportunities to speak to staff informally on a daily basis and attend parents' evenings to discuss their children's progress and records. Some parents suggest that a formal written report would be helpful. Parents' views are important to the nursery and they complete questionnaires at regular intervals to give their feedback. The nursery acts on this and recently has taken positive steps to introduce a parent liaison committee to get parents more involved in day-to-day issues. Most parents whose opinion was sought at inspection highly praise the care provided by the nursery, though some concern was raised about the impact of recent staff changes. The nursery has a complaints procedure that meets regulations.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are safeguarded because the nursery has effective recruitment and vetting procedures that ensure staff have relevant skills, experience and qualifications. Appropriate vetting

procedures are followed and those staff on whom checks have not been completed are closely supervised at all times, thus children are protected. Staff receive sufficient induction training, ongoing supervision and appraisals to inform them of the nursery's operating procedures and identify training and development needs. The nursery follows a thorough set of policies and procedures that promote children's health, safety and enjoyment. Record keeping is well-maintained and audited by the company to ensure standards are met.

Children's care is supported by sufficient staff ratios and key workers in their rooms who provide a link between the nursery and parents. Staff are generally deployed well and are confident with the children. Occasionally they do not effectively engage the children in constructive play or set out their expectations to the children, which means children's behaviour deteriorates. The nursery has recognised that children can be unsettled when there is a handover of staff and has recently made positive steps to change staffing patterns in an attempt to address this. Organisation of space and resources means most children have an appropriate range of opportunities to explore and make choices within their play. However, the older children have to share many of their resources between rooms, which restricts their independent access to a wide range of resources to support their learning.

The leadership and management of the nursery is satisfactory. The new manager is a strong leader and positive role model to staff and children. She has worked hard to strengthen staff teams, respects their opinions and has clear vision with regard to developing ideas and making further improvements. Consideration is being given to the effectiveness of the nursery education and there is good potential for further development. Some improvements to the overall setting have been made as a result of the issues raised at the last inspection. Other issues still need to be reviewed.

Overall children's needs are met.

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

At the last inspection the nursery was given recommendations to review the organisation of activities to enable children to make independent choices about their play, and review the organisation of snack and meal times to enable children to develop independence, social skills and ensure they wash their hands. Sound progress has been made. Children generally make choices about what they play with as resources have been re-arranged at low level for them to explore independently. Planned activities have also been limited to allow more time for children to follow their own interests. Children are becoming confident and independent at meal times as they help lay the table and serve their own food. They wash their hands before eating to promote good understanding of hygiene.

At the last education inspection the nursery was asked to review the provision of activities and experiences that challenge the older and more able children within all areas of learning, and to develop short term planning and ensure assessments are used to inform future planning. Some progress has been made. Staff in the pre-school deliver activities aimed at children's individual level of development, with groups of older or more able children being given specific challenges to extend their learning. However, activity plans do not target individual children or record how this takes place, so not all staff are able to identify how to challenge or support

particular children. The short term planning is generally effective, though staff changes in the room have meant that evaluations of activities and assessment records are inconsistent and somewhat brief.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since 1 April 2004 there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards. Ofsted received a concern that inexperienced staff were not being adequately supervised when caring for babies. Ofsted conducted an unannounced visit to the provision on 20 July 2006 to inspect in relation to National Standard 2 (Organisation). As a result of the visit four actions were set under National Standard 2 as follows: ensure that all staff caring for babies are competent to do so (Annex A); demonstrate that minimum staffing ratios are maintained at all times; review the system for registering children's and staff attendance in each room on a daily basis and ensure that information is accurate and up to date at all times; ensure that staff records include information about recruitment, induction, training and qualifications so as to evidence staff suitability to care for children and babies. The nursery reviewed its procedures for supervising students, managing staff records and monitoring staff attendance in each room. A positive response was received to the actions set and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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:

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **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):

- provide activities that are developmentally appropriate for the children under three years and ensure the system for observing and assessing children is used to plan the next steps for their play, learning and development
- further develop the way parents and carers are provided with information about the 'Birth to three matters' framework, the Foundation Stage curriculum and their children's progress
- ensure that all staff are deployed effectively and have clear expectations of their role to ensure the safety, welfare and development of the children throughout the day

## **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):

- plan the indoor and outside environment so children have constant access to a wide range of resources and learning areas that encourage them to explore, investigate and develop independence
- ensure plans target individual children's needs, and observation and assessment are thorough and are used effectively to plan the next stages of children's learning.

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)