



Busy Bees

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY233068
Inspection date	26 February 2007
Inspector	Karen Molloy
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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 satisfactory. 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 in a chain of day nurseries run by Busy Bees Nursery Limited. It opened in 2001 and operates from seven main rooms. Children also have use of a secure, enclosed outdoor play area. It is located in St Albans, Hertfordshire and serves the local community and surrounding areas. The nursery is open each weekday from 07:45 to 18:15 all year round. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The nursery is registered to care for a maximum of 65 children at any one time. There are currently 106 children aged from three months to under five years on roll. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 16 members of staff. Of these, nine hold appropriate early years qualifications and three are working towards a qualification. The Busy Bees group successfully achieved Investors In People status in July 2006.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are beginning to learn the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They help themselves to tissues and wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating, with young children given the necessary support. Older children learn the importance of hand washing; they talk about germs and how 'we will get poorly if we do not wash our hands'. Children stay healthy because staff follow effective procedures and practices that protect children from the risk of infection. A detailed and thorough cleaning rota ensures all areas of the nursery including toys, are kept clean and well maintained. The room temperature is monitored to ensure children are kept in an environment where they play and sleep comfortably. Nappies are changed regularly and disposed of appropriately, with changing mats disinfected after each use. A no-shoe policy in the baby room ensures babies are protected from dirt and germs. Children who are infectious do not attend and those who become unwell at nursery are cared for sensitively and appropriately. Thorough company policies and procedures support children's health and medical care. Children benefit from staff's up-to-date knowledge of first aid, with six staff also trained to deal with anaphylactic shock. There is a designated health and safety officer who manages this area very effectively, with sound practices and systems in place to maintain children's well-being.

Most children enjoy regular physical activity that promotes their physical development and encourages healthy living. They have daily access to the garden and occasionally enjoy walks out of the setting. Children's co-ordination, balance and rhythm is promoted as they use soft play equipment and participate in music and movement sessions. Babies and young children have space to crawl and move around freely. They utilise equipment that supports their development, as they learn to sit up and to walk. Older children take part in 'stretch and grow' sessions which teaches them the importance of exercise and an active lifestyle. A soccer coach teaches basic football skills and helps to develop children's confidence, in a fun and relaxed way. All children can take part in 'Tiny Mites', providing an opportunity to sing and move to action songs. Older children develop a good understanding of keeping healthy as they talk about their muscles and discuss how to warm up before exercise and cool down afterwards. Children rest and sleep according to their individual needs. Their sleep routines are discussed with parents and incorporated into the nursery routine.

Children are well nourished and benefit from a healthy, balanced diet. They learn about healthy living through routines, discussion and activities. Children are enthusiastic about eating the freshly cooked meals and they are generally allowed the independence to manage themselves. Staff are on hand to encourage and support them. Children enjoy lots of fruit and vegetables throughout the day and regularly stop for a meal or snack. Young babies are fed according to their own routines and information about weaning is discussed and shared with parents. Children's individual dietary requirements are met, as the nursery follows an effective colour

coded system to ensure allergies, intolerances and parents preferences are adhered to. Children have easy access to drinking water throughout the session.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, safe and secure environment where risks are identified and addressed. This enables children to move around safely and with some independence. However, there are no doors on the toilets for the older children, therefore children's privacy is not respected. Rooms are generally bright, cheerful and inviting with many resources laid out and available. Displays and posters are attractive and appropriate to children's age and stage of development. Children's safety is regularly monitored and reviewed through the sound systems that are in place, such as regular risk assessments. Appropriate safety measures such as a secure door system, close monitoring of visitors, regular fire drills and an accurate record of attendance for children and staff ensures children are protected. Children are beginning to learn to keep themselves safe. They walk carefully up and down the stairs, holding onto the banisters with staff close by to monitor and help them. All the relevant documentation regarding attendance and accident records is up to date.

Children have access to a range of safe and suitable equipment. Low storage enables children to make independent choices. Resources are regularly checked to ensure they are clean and well-maintained. Young babies have a varied range of bright and stimulating toys to help them sit, crawl and explore. Children in other rooms use a selection of equipment, although in some rooms there is more limited choice, that lacks challenge or interest.

Children are kept safe outdoors and on outings. When out walking, a high ratio of 1:2 is maintained and younger children travel in buggies. Outings are risk assessed and staff take the necessary items with them. Children's well-being is considered; in hot weather sun cream is used and staff ensure children use shaded areas and are appropriately dressed in all weathers. Appropriate written parental consent is in place for outings.

Children are protected by staff who generally understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. Most staff have attended child protection training and know to share any concerns with the designated person. The manager has previously completed training in this area and is aware of the need to update this information.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Babies and young children are happy and settled. They have their individual needs met as their care routines are discussed with parents and adhered to. Children form positive relationships with staff and their peers. They approach staff confidently with a story to tell or a question to ask. In turn, staff are kind, caring and patient and respond promptly to the children's needs. Staff are involved in the children's play and support and guide them as necessary. Children

develop confidence and self-esteem as they receive praise and encouragement. They are rewarded with a sticker for tidying up well and are proud of their achievement.

Younger children have activities planned for them that reflect the 'Birth to three matters' framework and most staff have an understanding of this. Children are generally keen and interested in what is available. They are able to make some of their own choices and enjoy taking part in the group activities such as singing and story time. However, there are some rooms where there is less choice and children do not have regular access to basic materials such as paint, water and sand, limiting their opportunities to explore and investigate freely. Generally children go out daily although some of the younger children do not benefit from daily fresh air and exercise. Children develop their knowledge and increase their vocabulary as they copy the adult, touching and naming various parts of the body. They are challenged as they try hard to dress the dolls, with adults on hand to support them. Children's progress is monitored through use of 'Trackers' and this information is shared with parents.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pre-school staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure that planning is effective, takes account of children's interests and provides some exciting learning opportunities. Although they are a new team, staff work together extremely well and are clear of their roles and responsibilities. They are pro-active, enthusiastic and work together to meet children's care and educational needs. Information is shared effectively and staff use their individual knowledge and skills to the benefit of the group. The environment is well planned to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. Activities are carried out well and ensure the children have a lot of fun as they learn. The room is welcoming, bright and stimulating. Many resources are kept in low storage, enabling children to make independent choices. Staff are on hand to support and guide the children. They encourage their independence and allow them to discover things for themselves. Equally, they extend the children's learning by giving them lots of information, answering their questions and asking questions to challenge and develop their thinking. Staff plan well and enable children to learn through structured, adult-led activities as well as through everyday experiences. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones and learning intentions are clear. Although differentiation is considered, it is not included in the planning, therefore it is not clear how more or less able children are challenged or supported. Planning and assessment is linked and ensures children's needs and interests are incorporated into future planning.

Children are confident and happy in the pre-school. They receive lots of praise and encouragement from staff to foster their confidence and self-esteem. They are keen to get into the room and settle well, quickly becoming absorbed in an activity. Children are clear of the boundaries and familiar with the rules, for example, they put their hands up before speaking and listen to each other. Children play together co-operatively and interact very positively with their peers and staff. They are confident to approach the staff and staff listen well to children.

Children are making good progress in all areas of learning. They are purposefully engaged and busy throughout the day. They show enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning as they sit well, concentrate, listen to stories and take part in discussions or activities. Children communicate

and express themselves with confidence. Children explore with a range of mark making and early writing, including using chalk, paint and practising writing their names. They write lists and take orders in the café. Consequently, children are acquiring useful skills in early literacy.

Children develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts as there are planned and spontaneous activities that focus on shape, measure and number. Children make human number lines and have to think where they go in the line. They begin to use mathematical language such as big and small and grasp the concept of space as they try to fit lots of animals into a building, realising there are too many. Children have many opportunities to count, they thread beads and count accurately up to eighteen. Children explore and investigate. They participate enthusiastically in a 'Mad Science' session where they experiment with mixing colours and learn about rainbows. Children are able to explain when a rainbow happens and are confident to ask questions.

Children are comfortable in their environment, they know the rules and show consideration for each other, for example, they move over to make room for another child and push their chairs in after lunch. Children are becoming independent learners, they choose their own resources, make decisions as to what to do next, manage aspects of their personal care such as putting on their coats and lay the table for their peers. Children are proud of their achievements, as they are clapped by the rest of the group, they show their pride by taking a bow! Children interact positively with each other. They read stories to each other and play together co-operatively.

Children have opportunities to use information and communication technology to aid their learning and use equipment competently and confidently. Children use a camera skilfully to take pictures of activities around the room and show good hand eye co-ordination as they use the computer mouse with control. Children develop a sense of time and place as they make books about their families and develop a knowledge of people who help us, by inviting people in from the community to talk about their job. Children have opportunities to listen to music, play instruments and sing songs. They engage in imaginative play in the 'Sunflower Café' and express their ideas through a range of media including sand, water, paint and dough. Children take rubbings and create collages using a variety of materials. They draw representational drawings of themselves, self portraits and add their own description such as 'I have freckles'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are catered for well and staff place high importance on settling in new families. This is done gradually and sensitively and existing children make regular visits to their new room, to ensure a smooth transition. A 'getting to know you' form completed with parents enables staff to become familiar with children's individual routines, likes and dislikes. Babies needs are responded to promptly and sensitively; staff recognise when they are tired or need to be made more comfortable. Children develop a sense of belonging, for example, they have their own place mats with their name and photograph and their own drawers for belongings and work. Children are asked for their contributions in discussions and activities and staff value this input. Children's awareness of the wider society is supported by posters, books and resources that depict positive images. Children with learning and or physical

disabilities are well supported; their needs are discussed with parents and recorded. The designated special education needs co-coordinator liaises with parents, staff and other professionals to ensure the ongoing needs of any children continue to be met. She attends appropriate meetings to ensure she is kept well-informed and up to date.

Children understand responsible behaviour. They play together well and there is little sign of disagreement or conflict. Older children play co-operatively and adults support this with opportunities for them to take turns and have an input into group discussions. During play, children ask others if they can help or politely ask 'can I play with you?'. Younger children are supported to be kind and caring to others and a child is observed giving another a hug. Children play harmoniously alongside each other and are learning how to share, co-operate and take turns. They are clear of the expectations and respond well to guidance from staff. Any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately and discussed with parents. Children use good manners and staff act as positive role models to reinforce 'good' behaviour. Praise and encouragement is used to promote good behaviour and this contributes to children's self-esteem and confidence.

Children are cared for by staff who work well in partnership with parents. Children are cared for according to parents' wishes and their views are actively sought. The nursery communicates effectively with parents in many ways including newsletters, informative notice board, company prospectus, suggestion box, welcome sheet for each room and a day sheet to feedback information at the end of the day. A parents liaison group has been formed and takes account of their views and opinions. A comments book is maintained for staff to share with parents if a child's key worker is not available. Parents feedback positively on recent improvements and they are pleased with the care they receive. They comment on 'caring staff who show a personal interest and give regular feedback' and 'excellent standard of care where staff are friendly, professional and efficient'. The nursery has all the relevant information regarding a complaints procedure.

The partnership with parents and carers who receive nursery education is good. Parents receive information via the pre-school notice board and regular newsletters covering topics and planning. However, there is limited information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, which means parents are not fully informed of their child's learning. Parents have the opportunity to speak to staff informally on a daily basis and parents evenings provide a more structured forum to discuss their child's progress and development. Parents receive a summary 'report' covering the six areas of learning and there is an opportunity for them to make comments in children's 'tracker' books regarding their development. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning; suggested activity sheets are shared with parents and cover a variety of fun and educational ideas to do at home. There are plans to organise information sessions for new parents, to inform them of the pre-school room and the curriculum they follow. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are well protected and cared for by staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Policies and procedures promote children's health, safety, enjoyment,

achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. Over half of the staff team hold an appropriate early years qualification and others are working towards one. A designated person for training ensures that staff are kept up to date and well-informed of current practice. Staff are familiar with company policies and procedures and they read these regularly to keep up to date. Staff meetings are used to share information and evaluate and monitor practice. Staff support each other and work well as a team to meet the needs of the children. Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust and ensure staff have relevant skills, experience and qualifications. Any staff who have not completed appropriate checks are supervised at all times, thereby ensuring that children are protected.

Children's care is supported by sufficient staff ratios and a key worker system that promotes good relationships with the children, staff and parents. However, space and resources are not always organised to meet children's needs effectively. One downstairs room is very busy as staff and children have to access this room in order to get to other areas of the nursery. Therefore, it is a constant thoroughfare and children are frequently interrupted and disturbed. In another room children and staff stop a number of times for meals and snacks. Consequently, children do not have enough time to become absorbed in their area of play or time to develop their interest and concentration. All the required records, policies and procedures are in place for the safe and efficient management of the provision. Record keeping is well-maintained and there are additional company audits to ensure standards are maintained.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The new manager is effective and pro-active in making improvements. She invests time to develop a solid team, is a good role model and ensures she is approachable and available to all staff. Senior staff meet regularly to discuss any room or nursery issues and information is shared effectively. Staff are clear of their roles and responsibilities and their skills are used to take on additional responsibilities, which they do well. The new deputy manager is responsible for the pre-school room and with other new staff, has made some valuable improvements. Quality initiatives have been introduced to focus on monitoring and improving specific areas of the setting including the nursery education. The integration of care and nursery education is promoted to enhance children's learning and recent changes have enabled one room to combine both the Foundation Stage curriculum and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Senior staff work well together to ensure this is planned appropriately to meet the needs of all children. New staff receive a thorough induction and their professional development is promoted with an expectation that they attend regular training and development. The management team have a clear vision with ideas for future improvement.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was given two actions and a number of recommendations. Actions related to maintaining the correct ratios and providing a suitable range of toys and resources for younger children. A new manager is in post and high priority is given to ensuring ratios are maintained at all times. There are suitable contingency plans in place for emergency cover to ensure children's welfare is protected. Additional toys and resources have been

purchased and these are made more accessible, thereby providing further choices for the children.

In relation to recommendations, the nursery was asked to ensure that snacks are presented appropriately, develop ways to communicate effectively with parents, devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities and develop staff's knowledge of child protection issues. An effective parent liaison group has been formed where staff and parents meet to share their views; this contributes to a good partnership with parents and ensures children's individual needs are met. There are many other ways the nursery works in partnership with parents to keep them well informed and these are detailed in the positive contribution outcome. All the relevant detail is included in the complaints procedure so parents concerns are dealt with correctly, to ensure a positive impact on children's well-being. Many of the staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three' framework and use this effectively to plan an implement a suitable range of activities for young children. However, there is still limited opportunities for children to use basic materials such as paint and water freely and frequently, and this is reflected in the outcome 'enjoying and achieving'. Generally, all staff have a sound knowledge of child protection issues and ongoing training is organised by Busy Bees to ensure they are kept up to date. This ensures children's welfare is protected.

At the last education inspection, a number of key issues were identified. Staff were asked to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. It was recommended that planning shows clear learning intentions, with consideration to children's different abilities, ages and stages of learning. The setting was also asked to ensure assessments are used to inform planning and to increase children's use of information, communication technology, music and outdoor physical play equipment. Information for parents regarding the educational programme and children's progress needed to be reviewed with more opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's learning. Finally, the setting was asked to improve procedures to monitor, support and evaluate staff and provision for nursery education.

In response, there have been a number of changes. There is a new manager, deputy manager and a number of other new staff since the last inspection. Children benefit from staff who are either knowledgeable or experienced in implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum. Plans show clear learning intentions linked to the stepping stones and children are appropriately challenged. Although differentiation is considered when carrying out activities, plans do not show individual children's needs, so it is not clear how particular children are challenged or supported. Assessments do inform planning and plans are led much by the children's needs and interests. Children now have regular access to information communication technology. They use cameras, tills, credit card swipes, the computer, keyboards and telephones. Music sessions are included in planning and there are additional opportunities to enjoy music and movement, through the 'Tiny Mites' and 'Stretch and Grow' sessions. Staff organise good active outdoor sessions for some of the children although this is limited for others.

Plans for the educational programme are now displayed for parents. Parents evenings are held twice a year and progress reports covering the six areas of learning are discussed with parents. Suggested activities and ideas to extend children's learning are shared with parents to provide them with opportunities to be involved in their child's learning. However, there remains limited information to parents about the Foundation Stage, particularly when children start in the pre-

school room. The new manager will be organising regular supervision with all staff to monitor practice and support staff. She is very approachable, spends a lot of time within the nursery and meets regularly with senior staff to ensure she knows what is going on. The company have introduced quality initiatives to focus on particular areas, enabling the setting to closely monitor and evaluate practice in different aspects of the nursery. Parents are asked to complete room assessments to feedback on their child's room and these are used to develop and share good practice. The manager and deputy work closely together, using their different strengths to assess the practices.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person and National Standard 2: Organisation. Concerns were raised that the correct adult to child ratios were not being met. As a result, Ofsted inspectors carried out a visit to the provision. A number of actions were identified in order to meet the National Standards. Ofsted was satisfied with the steps the provider has taken to meet the actions. The provider remains qualified for registration at the time the investigation was closed.

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 satisfactory. 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 all children benefit from regular outdoor play opportunities and provide a variety of creative media and materials for all children to investigate and explore freely
- ensure that the children's dignity and privacy are respected in relation to the toilet facilities
- review the organisation to ensure minimal disruption to children to enable them to become absorbed in their play

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 the information for parents in relation to the Foundation Stage curriculum
- ensure plans show how more or less able children are challenged or supported.

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