

Buckingham's Nursery School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218408
Inspection date	17 July 2007
Inspector	Jennie Lenton
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Registered person	Buckingham's Nursery School Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School 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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Buckingham's Nursery School opened in 1997. It operates from five rooms within a purpose built single storey building on the outskirts of the market town of Leek, Staffordshire. The nursery serves the local and surrounding areas.

The nursery opens five days a week all year round excluding Easter and Christmas. Sessions are from 07:30 until 18:00 Monday to Thursday and 07:30 to 17:30 on a Friday. There are currently 138 children from birth to 5 years on roll. This includes 34 funded three-year-olds and 18 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are 14 full-time staff and six part-time staff who work with the children. Of the staff, 95% have early years qualifications. Of these, one is an early years teacher, one has obtained the early years professional status and another holds the foundation degree in early years care. Most staff are qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or 3 and the nursery manager is currently working towards a level 4 qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Unquestionably, children benefit from the exemplary approach taken towards promoting a healthy lifestyle. The setting has designed its menus with care to provide an excellent variety of meals to suit all dietary requirements. Children are offered freshly prepared and attractively presented dishes which they thoroughly enjoy. Older children tuck in enthusiastically to well-balanced meals such as spaghetti bolognese or leek and potato pie, often asking for second or third servings. Babies squeal and squirm with delight as their lunch is brought in and develop good manipulative skills as they learn to feed themselves. A cafeteria style approach is used in the mornings to offer children a light breakfast of cereal, toast or fresh fruit. They are also provided with a light tea in the early afternoon as well as a cooked mid-day meal. As a result, children are extremely well nourished.

Mealtimes are relaxed and provide an opportunity for children to develop their understanding of diet as they happily discuss the foods they eat. For example, they talk about how carrots 'help you see in the dark' and how different foods are good or bad for you. Children further develop their interest in a healthy lifestyle through innovative experiences. They grow herbs in the garden which they then pick to garnish meals. They visit the local supermarket to select vegetables for a stew to make and take home. These engaging activities encourage children to think about where food comes from. There is constant access to fresh water as all children have their own cups or bottles. This ensures that they remain hydrated throughout the session as they meet their individual needs.

Children are expertly protected from cross-contamination as the setting has superb policies and procedures in place. All staff are trained in food hygiene and always wear disposable gloves when preparing and serving food. This reduces the risk of passing on bacteria. The consistent role modelling provided by staff means that children also recognise how to reduce health risks. For example, they go and ask for another fork as theirs drops to the floor. Their health is further promoted as they are provided with individual bed linen and flannels which are laundered after every use. Children wash their hands properly after visiting the toilet and before eating. Older children demonstrate an understanding of why such routines are necessary as they know that 'germs can make you sick'. As a result, they actively contribute to their own well-being, swiftly taking responsibility for meeting their own personal needs. Staff professionalism also ensures that children are excellently cared for in the event of an accident or if medication is required. Excellent written policies are precisely followed to ensure that all records are accurately maintained and routinely shared with parents. Consequently, children benefit from consistent high quality care.

There are splendid opportunities for physical development. The setting has a well-designed outside area which effectively promotes children's development through both sensory and physical play. Children energetically kick footballs or jump on the small trampoline. They relish their time running around in the fresh air or playing contentedly in the sand and soil areas. Children enjoy a high level of challenge as they use the climbing frame or access the setting's other facility to pedal tricycles and scooters on a large hard surface area. Visits to local parks provide opportunities for new challenges. The setting also provides dance lessons every week. A dance instructor leads children in moving imaginatively to music, developing a sense of rhythm. Pre-school children have a dedicated physical education session where they develop awareness of their own bodies through group exercise. There are also plenty of activities that

concentrate on using finer skills, for example using paint brushes and water squirters or manipulating cutlery with increasing control. As a result, children's physical skills rapidly develop.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Detailed health and safety policies work effectively in practice to safeguard children both at the setting and when on outings. The superior written guidelines are meticulously followed to ensure that children's safety is successfully prioritised. For instance, a preliminary visit is made by a member of staff before an outing is organised. Contact numbers, permission for emergency treatment and first aid equipment are taken on trips to enable staff to respond promptly to any issues that arise. Children also actively contribute to keeping themselves safe as they know how to behave during an outing. They understand that it is important to stay with their designated carer so that they 'don't get lost'. Innovative activities at the nursery also provide them with an understanding of risk. For example, play equipment is used to simulate a road with traffic lights and a zebra crossing so that children develop good road sense in a safe setting.

At the nursery, children benefit from a secure yet friendly environment where their welfare takes precedence. Risks are successfully limited through robust safety and security procedures. The exterior doors are all securely locked enabling staff to monitor access at all times. Staff are clear about the importance of checking the identity of callers, seeking identification from unknown individuals. This fully protects children from inappropriate visitors. As they play, children only access toys and equipment that conform to strict safety requirements. Regular checks guarantee that all resources remain fit for purpose. The high level of supervision provided by vigilant and focussed staff also reduces the potential for injury. The exemplary use of risk assessments further protects children from harm. A forward thinking and professional approach is taken as the management team review any incidents. This enables them to identify any trends and minimise identifiable risks. This outstanding practice effectively illustrates that safety is given the highest priority.

The excellent knowledge of child protection procedures demonstrated by staff helps to ensure children are protected from harm and neglect. All staff attend training on child protection and are required to update their knowledge with further courses as these arise. As a result, they are clear about how to record and report any concerns. There is a clear understanding of signs and symptoms that may alert them to child abuse and the setting demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding children from harm with a designated child protection officer.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are confident and happy at the setting. They are fully engaged and enthusiastic throughout the day as they enjoy superb opportunities to play and learn. Their self-esteem flourishes as staff give continual praise and positive reinforcement for their efforts. For instance, as they proudly show off their art work, staff comment that their creations are 'amazing'. Older children actively contribute to the running of the setting as they serve their own lunches and collect their own cutlery and crockery. This effectively develops their sense of self-worth. All children develop genuine warm relationships with the staff and each other. They are encouraged to share their home life with the setting as they talk about moving house or going on holiday. Younger children also bring in pictures of their family members which staff display so that children can see them throughout the day. There are plenty of opportunities for children to

snuggle up with staff as they read stories or comfort them. As a result, children are relaxed and contented.

All age ranges enjoy a fabulous range of stimulating experiences that encourage their intellectual and creative development. Their preferences are respected as they move around freely during 'free flow' sessions accessing a wide array of resources. Children relish the opportunity to play with musical instruments or make their own out of everyday objects. They giggle with glee as they explore the texture of shaving foam or play imaginatively with dressing-up clothes in the home corner. Staff expertly use the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure that outcomes for babies and younger children are fully promoted. Babies develop their exploratory impulses as they use all of their senses investigating 'treasure baskets'. Their communication skills are skilfully encouraged as staff talk to them throughout the day, responding to them as they babble and gurgle happily. Development is rapid as their progress is recorded and staff plan future activities to extend their skills. For example, a one to one reading session occurs to encourage emergent language.

Older children show a mature appreciation for the needs of others. They share resources harmoniously and wait patiently during group activities to take their turn. Positive actions are rewarded through the skilful use of praise and encouragement. For instance, as children help a member of staff to tidy up they beam with delight as they receive stickers for their efforts. Consequently, children are keen to make an active contribution to the smooth running of the setting. This results in them developing a sense of responsibility and a willingness to be kind and helpful.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Staff have undertaken specific training to a professional standard and therefore have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children progress through the stepping stones. They work effectively as a team, devising and delivering planned activities of unquestionable quality. A fantastic range of interesting and innovative experiences are offered to children which engage and stimulate them. These are expertly delivered to ensure that all children develop to their full potential across all areas of learning. Spontaneous events as well as planned routines are fully exploited throughout the day. For example, as children happen to find snails and slugs during outside play, staff encourage them to learn about them by providing a space for the children to observe them in detail. Similarly, routine times are used to full effect as children play a key part in them.

Children make splendid progress. All staff make quality observations about what children can do and record this information in children's individual assessment files. These are detailed and informative and show that rapid development occurs across all areas of learning. Staff review the children in their own key worker group and ensure that their progress is monitored. This effectively ensures that they have a clear picture of children's individual levels of attainment. This impacts positively as children's next steps are routinely included in future planning. Activities are, therefore, consistently pitched at the right level to fully extend children's learning.

Children are consistently engaged as staff use their considerable skill and experience to motivate and interest them during planned activities and free play. They are sensitive to individual learning styles and expertly ensure that all children are offered the right level of interaction. This ensures that more reserved children or those with additional needs are equally well supported and included in group activities. The lively and dynamic approach used during circle time helps to ensure children remain focussed. For example, during a turn-taking song, staff

ensure children remain engaged by building suspense about what style of singing will be used each time a child selects a musical instrument. Children's enjoyment is enhanced as they sing loudly, softly, slowly and quickly. Without a doubt, children benefit from the superb quality of teaching that they receive.

Children's attitude to learning is outstanding. They are eager to learn and display excellent levels of concentration, well beyond that expected for their age. Their self-help skills are also extremely advanced as they serve their own lunches and get dressed for physical education sessions with limited assistance. Children speak clearly and confidently as they converse with staff and each other. They link sounds to letters and rapidly recognise their name in print as the setting uses clear labelling. Books are plentiful and children treat them with respect as they seek out stories to enjoy alone or with others. This helps them to successfully develop early reading skills. Opportunities for children to use pencils and crayons are always available. As a result, they mark-make with an impressive level of control as they scribe their names or draw recognisable shapes.

Children understand and use numbers correctly. They count up to 10 confidently and are able to match number to object as a result of well-designed activities. They sort animal shapes into groups and correctly identify the number they have before calculating how many they will have as one is added or subtracted. They use mathematical language, such as 'more' or 'less', accurately as they compare their groups with others and are beginning to develop an understanding of volume. The relaxed approach used by all staff helps children to confidently undertake basic calculation and problem solving. As a result, all children make rapid progress in the area of mathematical development. Children's creativity is also blossoming. Their ideas are valued as they are free to use their imagination through a variety of fun experiences. They confidently explore different colours and textures as they explore a variety of different solids and liquids, mark-making in custard or playing with melted snow. They also express themselves as they dance to music or dress up to support their imaginative play.

Children also have excellent opportunities to investigate objects and find out about their surroundings. They enjoy exploring the natural world as they look for snails and slugs in the outside area. Their enthusiasm is further extended as staff arrange a talk from a local zoo. Children show a lively interest in the behaviour of creatures during an interactive session where owls, rabbits and lizards are brought into the nursery. Children also enjoy other visits from people in the community. They learn about being postal workers and doctors. Additionally, they learn about different traditions and ways of living. They celebrate the festivals of different religions and countries and are involved in some innovative activities. For example, eating with chopsticks and making Chinese money wallets. This helps children learn about their own beliefs and those of other people. Children relish the opportunities to use everyday technology. They are skilled at using a computer, manipulating the mouse with precision. They correctly identify their initials on a keyboard and skilfully use a digital camera to take pictures of their favourite activities. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is therefore extremely well extended through practical and exciting activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully supported. The physical environment promotes access for all with amenities on a single level. There is an excellent range of toys to meet differing needs, including sensory play and equipment. Staff work alongside other professionals to identify, monitor and meet additional needs early on. This approach

helps to ensure all children can reach their full potential. There is a designated member of staff to work with parents and co-ordinate the provision of support which results in the successful implementation of individual plans. Consequently, children with identified needs make rapid progress and achieve their individual goals. All children benefit from an inclusive approach, where activities are sensitively adapted to ensure that everyone is fully included. For example, during group activities and routine times staff ensure that children receive assistance only when it is required and give it in a natural and discreet manner. This protects the self-esteem of all while encouraging independence.

Similarly, all children are treated with equal concern as the setting has a high commitment to equal opportunities. There is a clear and comprehensive policy which fully supports excellent practice. Children are encouraged to value their individuality while showing respect for diversity. This is successfully promoted through a wide range of innovative activities such as 'Grandparents Day', where relatives attend the nursery and engage in non-stereotypical play with the children. Different festivals and traditions such as Diwali are also celebrated. This helps children to embrace difference. All children's records are extremely well detailed to ensure that they receive high standards of care relating to their own requirements. These are regularly updated as staff check to guarantee that all relevant information has been provided.

Children's behaviour is superb. Staff are highly effective in managing behaviour as consistent methods are used throughout the nursery. This ensures that children have clear boundaries and fully understand what behaviour is expected of them. The skilful use of praise and positive reward encourages children to behave well, and unwanted behaviour is handled calmly. Staff have an excellent awareness of children's development and understand that displays of poor behaviour are often linked to levels of maturity. As a result of this sensitivity, children are always responded to in developmentally appropriate ways. This helps them to learn to control their behaviour and find other ways to express themselves. A sense of responsibility is further promoted as older children play a dynamic role in the running of the setting. For example, they help staff to tidy toys away. As their contributions are valued, they take pride in caring for themselves, other children and the setting. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Parents and carers are fully informed about the setting as a result of highly effective communication systems. A superior welcome pack is provided which contains valuable information about the setting and its work with children. Parents are fully informed as to the care their children receive through an induction visit and interview. This process ensures that any special needs or requirements are fully discussed and taken into account. For example, parents are asked to look at the setting's menus and inform staff of any meals which they feel are unsuitable. Staff make time to speak with parents on a daily basis which ensures that any changes are promptly shared to promote children's well-being. A beautifully presented memento book with photos and artwork is also collated for each child to show their progress through the nursery. Parents are further invited to become familiar with children's activities through the spectacular 'hands on' evenings. The nursery is set out with activities for parents to come in and obtain first hand experience of what it is like for a child to attend the setting. These exceptional events provide a unique opportunity which parents find extremely illuminating and enjoyable.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. Parents receive detailed written information on the educational programme and are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning throughout the term. They are asked to contribute to staff's understanding of their child's abilities and are invited to view

their child's progress records at any time. Review meetings can be booked throughout the term and a final review is arranged before children leave the nursery. The setting also provides regular newsletters which detail the topics pre-school children are covering and through the 'hands on' evenings parents experience how activities are set up to help children develop. This enables them to extend their children's learning at home. As a result of these excellent opportunities to contribute, parents are able to fully support their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

As a result of highly developed management systems and meticulous planning, children receive superb care from well-qualified individuals. Children's play and learning is significantly enhanced as experienced, enthusiastic staff work alongside them throughout the day. This is because all staff share an eagerness to provide top quality care. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that the nursery only employs those who share this commitment. Consequently, children thrive. All staff receive a comprehensive induction which ensures that they are quickly familiar with the robust policies and procedures. Any changes or new policies are efficiently communicated through the 'room manager' system. This successfully promotes the welfare of children.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is outstanding. Children are progressing and achieving rapidly because of the skilled team of staff who deliver activities. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills as they all have opportunities to plan the curriculum under the guidance of strong management. This ensures that children are constantly benefiting from new ideas and techniques. The setting evaluates its own performance and is successful in identifying its own strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear desire to continually raise standards and improve outcomes for children.

All staff are actively encouraged to improve their practice through the well-developed training programme and appraisal system. Staff are fully supported in accessing further training up to degree level and also benefit from outside input as the nursery utilises the skills of other professionals. For example, inviting prominent early years practitioners to the setting to give advice and guidance. This effectively stimulates and motivates staff which leads to innovative practice. The unmistakable dedication displayed by all staff ensures that children relish their time at the setting. Documentation is consistently of a high standard, available for inspection and stored with due regard for confidentiality. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the setting was required to ensure that all accident and medication records are shared with parents and that all staff fully understand the fire evacuation procedures. Documentation shows that parents now consistently sign to acknowledge both the administration of medicine and any incident where their child has been injured. This sound practice ensures that children are protected as all carers are fully informed as to their needs. The fire evacuation procedure is clearly written and effectively prioritised through induction procedures and regular practises. As a result, new staff as well as more established employees are able to explain the procedures that need to be followed. This helps to ensure that children are safe in the event of an emergency.

To improve the standards in nursery education, the setting was required to ensure that the planning and assessments clearly link to the stepping stones and identify individual learning

targets for children. Children's files clearly show that staff now observe and record their progress in line with the stepping stones. Individual levels of attainment are known and understood as staff have key worker groups. Staff note the individual progress of children in their group and plan activities to help them reach their next level of achievement. As a result, children are effectively challenged according to their own levels of development. This ensures they continually progress and achieve.

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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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