

Busy Bees at Hatfield Road

601a Hatfield Road, Smallford, ST. ALBANS, Hertfordshire, AL4 0HL

Inspection date	22/08/2013
Previous inspection date	16/09/2008

The quality and standards of the early years provision	This inspection:	
	Previous inspection:	
How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend		2
The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children		2
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision		2

The quality and standards of the early years provision

This provision is good

- The quality of teaching in the pre-school is extremely good. The children develop good critical thinking skills and take an active role in directing their learning. This prepares them very well for their future learning in school.
- The garden offers exciting opportunities for children to explore and investigate. This keeps children very well motivated and builds their confidence and independence in deciding how to use the interesting space and resources.
- Children are happy, confident and make very positive relationships with key persons and other familiar adults. This helps them feel secure and self-assured.
- Partnerships with parents and others are strong and contribute very effectively to supporting children's learning and well-being. There is good communication and sharing of information which enables parents to be well involved in supporting activities. This provides children with good continuity of care and learning.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There is scope to further improve the way in which any gaps in the educational programme are identified so that these can be addressed more swiftly to enable every child to make the very best possible progress in all areas of learning.

Information about this inspection

Inspections of registered early years provision are:

- scheduled at least once in every inspection cycle – the current cycle ends on 31 July 2016
- scheduled more frequently where Ofsted identifies a need to do so, for example where provision was previously judged inadequate
- brought forward in the inspection cycle where Ofsted has received information that suggests the provision may not be meeting the legal requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage or where assessment of the provision identifies a need for early inspection
- prioritised where we have received information that the provision is not meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and which suggests children may not be safe
- scheduled at the completion of an investigation into failure to comply with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection activities

- The inspector observed activities in all rooms and the outside area.
- The inspector looked at a selection of policies, procedures and children's learning records.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the manager in the pre-school.
- The inspector spoke with the management, staff and children at appropriate times throughout the inspection.
- The inspector spoke to parents and took account of their views expressed in surveys and emails.

Inspector

Hilary Preece

Full Report

Information about the setting

Busy Bees Day Nursery at Hatfield Road was registered in 2001 and is on the Early Years Register. It is situated in the Smallford area of St Albans, Hertfordshire, and is managed by Busy Bees Nurseries Limited. The nursery serves the local area and is accessible to all children. It operates from a two-storey building and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The nursery opens Monday to Friday, all year round, from 7.45am until 6.15pm. Children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 76 children attending who are in the early years age group. The nursery provides funded early education for three- and four-year-old children. The nursery supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The nursery employs 24 members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 2 and 11 at level 3, including one with Qualified Teacher Status.

What the setting needs to do to improve further

To further improve the quality of the early years provision the provider should:

- strengthen further the way in which the educational programme and observation process are monitored, to more speedily identify any inconsistencies and gaps in learning, particularly in relation to providing more resources and activities for two- and three-year-old children to explore numbers, shape, space and measure.

Inspection judgements

How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

Staff have a secure knowledge about the individual needs and prior achievements of children because they frequently discuss and share their observations with parents. Any observations from home made by parents are considered when planning for children's current interests. This means that key persons build up a complete picture of each child and planned next steps are well targeted to support further progress in children's learning. Furthermore, parents receive a development summary every three months which keeps them very well informed about their children's progress and how they can support learning at home. There are effective procedures to identify and support children with additional needs. Early intervention is sought from the appropriate professionals or agencies and individual learning or behaviour plans are devised in conjunction with parents.

Consequently, plans are sharply focused to enable all children to make good progress. Staff work very closely with parents whose children speak English as an additional language. Staff encourage parents to provide books and key words in the home language so that children can hear and use their first language in the nursery. This is important for them in order to also master the English language.

Staff are well deployed to support children's learning and quick to observe and respond to children's particular interests. For example, when children choose to visit the cosy and inviting book corners, staff sit with children and read to them to develop their listening, understanding and speaking. Staff support children to find their own ways of using tools and creative media in art and design. This encourages children to think for themselves and to develop and express their own ideas. Babies are introduced to sensory experiences as they use their bodies to make marks with paint on large sheets of paper. Children confidently move and handle a range of equipment and tools in the garden. They operate a water pump, fill containers in the water tray and manipulate spades to fill buckets with sand. Children negotiate obstacles as they ride wheeled toys around a track and enthusiastically take part in music and movement activities by jumping and shaking.

There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Staff make good use of unplanned opportunities to encourage children to think critically and extend their learning. For example, as children build towers with a set of transparent coloured cubes on a 'light panel' staff encourage children to count and compare the size of the towers and then ask children to consider what happens when they look through the coloured cubes. An 'academy' programme in pre-school is used to gradually introduce children to more structured activities in order to equip them well for school. For example, children participate in 'show and tell' sessions. Children learn to take turns, listen to others and gain confidence to speak and express their thoughts and ideas in a small group within a quiet, cosy area of the room. Literacy activities are introduced discreetly and are made fun, such as using a 'silly soup song' to help children become aware of letters and sounds. Consequently, pre-school children develop a secure foundation on which to build their future learning.

The contribution of the early years provision to the well-being of children

Babies settle into the nursery routine easily and build strong bonds with their key person and other familiar adults. This is because staff gather all the relevant information from parents to ensure children's individual needs and care routines are met. Staff are sensitive to how children are feeling and offer plenty of reassurance when needed. This helps children feel safe and secure. Staff complete daily communication books which inform parents about their children's care each day, and parents are encouraged to share important information from home to keep staff fully aware of any particular needs or issues. There are effective arrangements to help children transfer to the next room within the nursery. Children visit the room on several occasions, and initially with their key person for reassurance, which allows them to build relationships with new people and gain confidence in the new environment. Key persons are very aware of children who may need additional support to cope with change and this is carefully considered to make the transition as seamless as possible.

The nursery environment is welcoming and thoughtfully planned. This allows children to explore their surroundings and independently make choices in what they do. Babies, for example, confidently toddle around their room to explore different resources and equipment, which they use with great enthusiasm and growing control. Children are particularly eager to explore the garden which provides many interesting spaces and a good variety of equipment. Some children enjoy free-flow access to the garden from their rooms, giving them the opportunity to be outside in the fresh air frequently if they choose. Older children become aware of their safety as they help staff to complete risk assessments of the garden and use safety cones around the 'construction site' imaginative play area. This encourages children to think about potential hazards and how to protect themselves and others. Children behave sensibly when ascending or descending the stairs so that they remain safe. They demonstrate polite manners by using 'please' and 'thank you' at appropriate times. They show respect for their surroundings and are eager, for example, to collect and put away toys when there is a sudden downpour of rain.

Children become aware of why certain foods benefit their health and development by taking part in activities. For example, they contribute to displays about healthy eating and plant and nurture vegetables in the garden. Staff act as positive role models to children as they sit around the table with them and engage in conversations and encourage children to try a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Meals are freshly prepared on site and are carefully planned to meet children's nutritional and individual dietary requirements. Children are eager to do things for themselves, such as, pouring their drinks and carrying their plates to the table. They evidently enjoy mealtimes and have hearty appetites, often asking for more. As pre-school children prepare to go to school they have opportunities to bring a packed lunch to practise opening packets and drinks so that they are self-sufficient when they get to school. Staff support children to take responsibility for their personal care by reinforcing expectations for good hygiene. Children are accompanied to the bathrooms where they wash their hands thoroughly and safely dispose of used paper towels.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years provision

The management team follows a well-established procedure for the recruitment, induction and training of staff. Rigorous checks are completed to ensure staff are suitable and a thorough induction process is carried out to equip staff with the specific knowledge required to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Safeguarding procedures are robust and well understood. Management and the staff demonstrate a good knowledge of what action to take in the event of any concerns about a child's well-being or allegations against staff. They adhere to a policy banning the use of mobile camera phones within the nursery rooms in order to protect children. Staff keep children safe during day-to-day activities and routines. They supervise children closely throughout the day, paying particular attention to how they account for children as they move between the rooms, the garden and the bathrooms. Staff complete checks of all areas of the premises and equipment and all risk assessment records are closely monitored by health and safety representatives to ensure procedures are consistently implemented and

children's safety is assured. The management team takes seriously any lapses in quality and carries out a full and thorough investigation in order to review and tighten procedures where necessary.

Arrangements for monitoring the learning and development requirements are generally reliable. The nursery has introduced a useful tool for tracking children's progress which confirms the generally high levels of achievement as well as any variations or trends in learning. This has recently identified the need for staff to plan activities and provide additional resources for two- and three-year-old children to explore numbers, shape, space and measure. However, there is capacity for closer monitoring of day-to-day practice and evaluation of room environments in order to more quickly identify any gaps in learning or inconsistencies in observations and planning systems.

The nursery team strives for excellence and shows a determined attitude to continuous improvement. There is an effective self-evaluation process that includes the views and contributions from all staff, parents, children and partners. Parents have the opportunity to join a parent partnership group which enables them to represent the views of the parent body and thus play an instrumental role in the future development of the nursery. Since the last inspection the nursery has developed very well. It has introduced a range of initiatives to enhance children's learning and made significant improvements to the garden. This has a very positive impact on children's enthusiasm for outdoor play and exploration.

Partnership working is a particular strength and makes a significant contribution to ensuring there is very effective continuity in children's care and learning. The nursery works closely with parents, external agencies and professionals at every stage of the child's time at nursery in order to share information and together support children's needs. The pre-school staff forge positive relationships with schools that children move on to. They encourage teachers to visit to meet children in an environment familiar to the children and to share information with key persons so that teachers have an accurate assessment of their achievements in order to plan for their continued progress.

What inspection judgements mean

Registered early years provision

Grade	Judgement	Description
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Grade 1	Outstanding	Outstanding provision is highly effective in meeting the needs of all children exceptionally well. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 2	Good	Good provision is effective in delivering provision that meets the needs of all children well. This ensures children are ready for the next stage of their learning.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory provision is performing less well than expectations in one or more of the key areas. It requires improvement in order to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	Provision that is inadequate requires significant improvement and/or enforcement action. The provision is failing to give children an acceptable standard of early years education and/or is not meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It will be inspected again within 12 months of the date of this inspection.
Met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider continues to meet the requirements for registration.
Not met		The provision has no children on roll. The inspection judgement is that the provider does not meet the requirements for registration.

Inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY233068
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	908118
Type of provision	
Registration category	Childcare - Non-Domestic
Age range of children	0 - 5
Total number of places	65
Number of children on roll	76
Name of provider	Busy Bees Nurseries Limited
Date of previous inspection	16/09/2008
Telephone number	01727 833980

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Type of provision

For the purposes of this inspection the following definitions apply:

Full-time provision is that which operates for more than three hours. These are usually known as nurseries, nursery schools and pre-schools and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the higher fee for registration.

Sessional provision operates for more than two hours but does not exceed three hours in any one day. These are usually known as pre-schools, kindergartens or nursery schools

and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are registered on the Early Years Register and pay the lower fee for registration.

Childminders care for one or more children where individual children attend for a period of more than two hours in any one day. They operate from domestic premises, which are usually the childminder's own home. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Out of school provision may be sessional or full-time provision and is delivered before or after school and/or in the summer holidays. They are registered on the Early Years Register and must deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage. Where children receive their Early Years Foundation Stage in school these providers do not have to deliver the learning and development requirements in full but should complement the experiences children receive in school.

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