

Bletchley Pre-School Including Cuddles Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	141792
Inspection date	18 April 2007
Inspector	Cordalee Harrison
Setting Address	Activities Centre, Porchester Close, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK3 7DF
Telephone number	01908 375351
E-mail	
Registered person	Bletchley Pre-school
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

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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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Bletchley Pre-School Including Cuddles Nursery was registered in 1968; the nursery area was opened in 2001. The setting is located in Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. A committee of volunteers manages the setting. The setting is comprised of two large halls and two smaller rooms as well as a kitchen, toilet and washing facilities and a securely fenced outdoor area for children to use. Children from the local community and outlying areas attend the setting.

The setting is open Monday to Friday term time only. The opening times for the nursery

provision are from 08.30 to 15.10. The pre-school operates from 09.10 to 11.40 and 12.40 to 15.10. There are currently 85 children aged under five years on roll. Of these, 50 children are in receipt of funding for nursery education. Children who speak English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties attend the setting.

The committee employs 18 full and part-time staff, 16 of whom work directly with the children. Of these, five hold relevant childcare qualifications and five are currently on training courses. The manager is qualified to level 3 in management.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

To promote children's health and fitness, staff plan suitable physical activities for children in all areas of the setting. This enables children to participate in a wide range of physical activities indoors and outside daily. Older children improve their balance and coordination as they pedal bikes and use scooters. They walk with balancing cans and play various games including throwing and catching out in the fresh air and sunshine. They move freely and with pleasure and confidence. For example, in an indoor activity they climb the steps, balance carefully as they walk across the bridge and move their bodies in different ways, such as arms stretched to the sides and above their heads as they jump and land on the mat. Younger children toddle around and explore the resources including the water play, whilst enjoying the fresh air. Babies enjoy the outdoor experience in their pushchairs and whilst being held by their carers.

To minimise the risks of infection for children all areas of the setting are maintained to a satisfactory standard of hygiene and cleanliness. Children's resources are clean and items, such as dummies and feeding cups are stored individually and sterilised regularly. To promote young children's health and hygiene their nappies are changed routinely throughout the day and at additional times when necessary. Staff give children appropriate levels of support whilst they are potty training. Children are developing good self-care skills. For example, older children confidently recognise when they need to use the toilet and most pre-school aged children use the toilet and washing facilities independently. To safeguard children's health there is a good system in place, which is known to staff and parents for the management of children's allergies. However, not all children's packed lunches are labelled; there is a reliance on staff and some children identifying their lunch bags. This presents the risk of children eating food that may compromise their health. To safeguard children's health their medication and minor accidents are managed properly. Accidents and medication are recorded clearly; the record contains all of the required information. To deal with children's minor accidents a member of staff who is qualified in first aid is available at each session and sufficient first aid equipment is available for staff to use.

Children in all areas of the setting eat a satisfactory range of food, which is provided by their parents. Children's food is stored appropriately in fridges and in cool areas and presented to them in a hygienic manner. They are learning to make healthy choices about their snacks because the setting provides them with nutritious snacks, which include fresh fruits, milk and water each day. To help children to develop their self-care skills and independence fresh drinking water is easily accessible to them throughout the day. Staff are particular to provide water for children to drink whilst they are playing outside. Some children help themselves to water independently, whilst others approach staff and ask for a drink.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The setting is appropriately maintained. It is warm, clean, bright and reasonably comfortable for children to use. There is sufficient space for children to carry out their activities and all rooms are properly equipped. For example, appropriate nappy changing equipment and resources are in the areas where the children aged under three years are located and appropriate toilet and washing facilities are in close proximity to where pre-school aged children are based. The setting is equipped with ample good quality play resources to meet the learning and

developmental needs of all the children. A good amount of resources are easily accessible to children, they are rotated regularly throughout the day; this keeps children interested in learning. The rooms are organised to enable children to move freely between a wide range of age and stage appropriate resources and pre-school aged children move freely between in and outdoor play. The effective use of resources, such as potties, beakers, high chairs and other child size equipment, helps children to develop their independence.

Children play and learn in generally safe surroundings. To reduce the risks of harm to them some effective safety precautions are taken in the setting. For example, the entrance and exits are secure and the outdoor area is securely fenced. This means that children are not able to leave the premises unsupervised and others cannot enter without permission. Hazardous substances are not accessible to children and appropriate cupboards and sheds are locked, electrical sockets are fitted with safety plugs, and suitable fire fighting equipment is easily accessible in all areas. There is a risk assessment in place, which covers most areas in the setting. However, it is not always used effectively to identify potential risks to children. For example, following the fitting of new floor surfaces an assessment was not completed to ensure that floor mats would not slip on the new surface and endanger children. This presents dangers for children to slip, trip and hurt themselves. In addition, not all issues relating to the safe maintenance of equipment are addressed. For example, children use pedal bikes with no rubber on the pedals. To help children to evacuate the premises quickly and safely, fire exits are marked and kept clear and they practise the fire drill regularly to ensure that it is familiar to them.

Staff demonstrate sound knowledge of the setting's child protection policy and procedure. They are clear about the signs and symptoms that may indicate possible abuse and the action they must take to safeguard children's welfare. There is a clear line of communication in place for dealing with child protection issues in the setting and with the local and registering authority, which is known to staff. Information about child protection issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board is available in the setting and easily accessible to staff, this enables them to act immediately to safeguard children's welfare. However, the setting's child protection policy does not contain all of the relevant information. For example, it does not include a contact number for the local social services to enable parents to act independently to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are becoming familiar with the daily routine, they enter the setting happily and most separate easily from their parents. When necessary staff give children appropriate levels of support to enable them to settle and join in the activities. The youngest children settle well because staff who are familiar to them care well for them. They are making good progress across all areas of their learning and development because staff plan carefully and make effective use of government guidance, such as the Birth to three matters framework. Children enjoy many first hand experiences, because they regularly participate in a wide range of activities, which encourages them to explore and experiment. For example, they relate warmly to their carers, use interactive toys, explore treasure baskets and enjoy water play.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the guidance to the Foundation Stage curriculum; they link their plans and activities securely to the stepping stones. This ensures that they plan consistently to cover all areas of learning and help children to make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff are skilful at developing children's

listening skills. For example, before a group of children go to wash their hands they are each given a number between one and seven. Children listen carefully for their number, they quickly identify when the numbers are called out of sequence. This well structured activity also helps the children to consolidate what they know, learn to take turns and to leave the hall in an orderly manner. Children have many opportunities to count and sequence numbers as they sing number rhymes dealing with numbers from nought to 10. Children are developing confidence in using numbers over 10, they know that to replicate 17 they need a one and a seven. They recognise different shapes, including circles, rectangle and squares. They relate them to familiar objects, such as the clock, doors and windows in the room.

Children are developing good communication skills. They speak openly in group activities as they talk about what they do when they are away from the setting. They listen carefully and follow simple instructions, to complete tasks, such as putting jigsaw puzzles together and to get ready to go outside. They use marking equipment regularly and form letters, numbers and shapes with air writing. They approach staff confidently and ask for assistance as well as to give information. For example, they let staff know when they are leaving the area go to the toilet. Children enjoy a variety of creative activities as they dress-up and engage themselves freely with pretend play. They practise what they know and extend their role-play as they use props that bring their role-play to life. For example, they experience what it feels like to walk with crutches and walking frames as they play hospitals. They further extend their learning as they look for signs that indicate that areas are suitable for people with disabilities. Children use modern technology, such as programmable toys, keyboards and computers. Children are developing a good understanding of time and place; they talk confidently about the season they know that it is spring and give many examples of events that take place at this time of year, for example, new leaves on trees, baby animals, spring flowers and longer days and shorter nights.

Children enjoy large and small group activities regularly throughout the day; this allows staff to set some challenges for specific groups of children. However, because they do not plan consistently for the next step for individual children's achievement the challenges are general and not specific to individual children. Staff make good use of the setting's resources; this enables children to set their own challenges. For example, children use the puzzles of different complexity and show concentration and determination as they work to complete their chosen picture. Children make use of the wide range of books that are easily accessible to them; they explore books individually as well as share their favourite stories with their friends. A group of children explain that their favourite books are the 'Ninja Turtles'; they like the stories because the turtles have lots of fun and do good things for others. Children use their creative activities and ideas to extend their activities. For example, they illustrate the story of the 'Hungry caterpillar', which enables them to practise their skills across all of the areas of learning and produce a bright and colourful picture for their reference.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's record forms contain all of the required information to safeguard their health and welfare and some information to enable staff to meet their individual care needs. Staff carry out regular observations of children across the setting. However, the records are not sufficiently developed to include the next step in individual children's achievements. Children use sufficient practical resources and raise their awareness of cultural diversity and disabilities. They acknowledge a number of cultural celebrations including Easter and Chinese New Year. They are learning to value their own culture and that of others. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is fostered. Children are learning the boundaries that are in place for behaviour. Older children are clear about the expectation for them to behave well and consider others because staff remind them often and involve them in maintaining the boundaries for good behaviour. For example, at the start of each session staff help children to remember why it is important for them to behave well. Staff praise the children and let them know when they have done well; children behave well and a busy and purposeful atmosphere is achieved in the setting.

The setting is experienced at caring for children with learning difficulties. The special needs coordinator is well trained and knowledgeable about putting the correct strategies in place to assess children when necessary. There is a systematic procedure in place for dealing with children's special needs; it is known to staff and some parents are aware of it. The setting is experienced at working with parents and outside agencies to implement the procedure. This ensures that the right strategies and resources are in place to meet the needs of children as identified. The setting uses suitable strategies and involves the parents and appropriate professionals effectively to meet the care and educational needs of children with learning difficulties; an inclusive environment is achieved for all of the children.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The setting takes some effective steps to involve parents in their children's care. They share some written and verbal information with parents about their children's care and learning daily. For example, younger children's care records are available for parents daily. Many parents thank staff with letters and cards for the care they provide for children. However, the setting's prospectus contains basic information about the setting's activities and the parents' notice board contains very little information. The setting's policies and procedures are not readily accessible to parents and little information is shared with them about the Foundation Stage curriculum and pre-school activities. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is limited because they are not regularly provided with advance information about the topics their children are studying to enable and encourage them to prepare their children or extend their children's learning away from the setting. Parents are made aware of their children's observation records, however, there is no systematic procedure in place for parents to review the records and discuss their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into an appropriately organised setting where they are generally safe and secure. The setting operates with sufficient staff and ample good quality age and stage appropriate resources that are attractive and accessible for children to use. Sufficient staff work directly with the children and a member of staff who holds a suitable childcare qualification supervises all areas. However, the setting does not always achieve the 50% qualified staff in all areas. The management team is actively supporting a number of staff to acquire the required childcare qualifications. Several staff are currently attending training courses and are due to complete their training at the end of the summer term. All staff are familiar with guidance issued by government, such as guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to three matters. They use them effectively to ensure that the children are always provided with appropriate levels of play and stimulation. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

All documentation that is required to safeguard children's health and welfare is in place and most contains all of the relevant information. The recruitment procedure is sound with systems to safeguard children's welfare. For example, only people who are cleared through the vetting procedure are alone with children and the induction procedure covers all essential elements;

new staff are clear about their role in the setting. The involvement of all staff in planning the setting's activities ensures that activity plans cover all areas of children's learning. There are a number of policies and procedures in place. However, some essential policies, including the lost child and the child protection policies do not contain the necessary information to provide sufficient guidance for staff and parents. In addition, the setting's policies are not readily accessible to parents.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The setting maintains a stable team of core staff. They are provided with ample good quality resources, they also receive training to develop their knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the stepping stones. They use their knowledge effectively to help children to enjoy and achieve well as they promote their learning across the curriculum. However, the setting does not achieve good outcomes in all areas of the nursery education. For example, the setting does not share good quality information about the Foundation Stage curriculum with parents to help them to support their children's learning and there is not a systematic procedure in place to share children's achievements with parents. In addition there is no system in place to evaluate all aspects of the nursery education. For example, children's achievement records are not sufficiently developed to include the next step in their achievements to ensure that each child's learning is maximised, or to assess the overall performance of the nursery education to gain consistent improvements in all areas.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection and a subsequent visit, the provider was asked to develop an effective procedure for risk assessment to identify risks and reduce hazards in all areas of the premises. The provider was also asked to make sure that the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection has a clear understanding of their role in the protection of children, and to develop all staff's knowledge and understanding of the Area Child Protection Committee procedures. The provider was also asked to provide opportunities for all staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of the setting's policies and procedures to enable them to be used effectively in all areas of the setting. In addition, the provider was also asked to put suitable complaints procedures in place and ensure that records relating to children's daily routines are completed accurately.

Since the last Children Act inspection, the provider has developed a procedure for risk assessments and some procedures to check for hazards in the setting. However, the procedures are not always used effectively to identify all potential hazards to children. Some safety issues are currently not properly addressed to assure children's safety in all areas. The provider has taken effective steps to develop staff's knowledge of child protection. All staff including the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection demonstrate sound knowledge and clear understanding of their role in child protection. The child protection procedure is now based on information from the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to enable staff to act without delay to safeguard children's welfare. Staff are now aware of the setting's policies and procedures because they discuss them regularly at staff and training meetings. They are familiar with the policies and use most of them effectively to guide their childcare practice. In addition, there is now a suitable complaints policy in place and a record of complaints made by parents is available to provide guidance and information for parents. To provide parents with up to date information about their younger children's daily care routine a record is completed accurately each day.

At the last nursery education inspection, the provider was asked to increase opportunities for parents to be more involved in their children's assessments and for them to be given more

information about the group's activities. The provider was also asked to ensure planning covers all areas of children learning, to evaluate plans and activities, and to plan to help children progress to the next step in their learning.

Since the last nursery education inspection, the provider has made some progress to improve the quality of the nursery education for children. Staff now plan well and carry out some evaluation of the plans and activities relating to the Foundation Stage curriculum. This ensures that they consistently provide good quality play opportunities to progress children's learning across the curriculum. However, the plans and assessment records do not include how individual children will be supported to take the next step in their learning. Parents are currently not involved in developing their children's assessment records and very little information is shared with them about pre-school activities. This means that they have very little input to help to progress or to extend their children's learning, particularly when children are away from the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, there has been one complaint made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take action in order to meet the National Standards. It related to National Standard 7: Being Healthy and National Standard 12: Partnership with parents. Concerns were raised about the personal care of children and about the setting's procedure for dealing with complaints. An inspector visited the setting and investigated the complaint. The provider was asked to ensure that all records relating to children's daily routines are filled in regularly and accurately and also to put in place a complaints procedure and maintain a log of parents' complaints. The provider remained qualified for registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaint 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 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):

- make sure that all children's packed lunches are labelled with their names
- make sure that the risk assessment is used effectively to minimise risks to children in all areas of the setting
- improve children's achievements records to include the next step in their learning and make the setting's policies accessible to parents (also applies to nursery education)

- continue to work with the development plan to achieve the appropriate level of qualified staff in the setting and make sure that the setting's policies contain all of the relevant information.

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):

- share information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and activities with parents and put in place a system to inform them of children's achievements and progress
- put in place a system to evaluate the nursery education to ensure that children's learning is maximised.

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