



St. Brendans Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	315954
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Angela Rowley
Setting Address	St. Brendans RC School, Brookfold Lane, Bolton, Lancashire, BL2 4DZ
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Registered person	Maureen Grundy
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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St. Brendan's Pre-School Playgroup operates from a self-contained unit within the grounds of St. Brendan's R.C. primary school in Harwood, Bolton. The group has been operating since 1984 and the current provider has been running the pre-school since 2000. Children are cared for in one main room, which is divided into three separate areas for the care of different age groups.

A maximum of 49 children aged under five years may attend the nursery at any one time. At present there are 79 children on roll. Of these, 33 are in receipt of funded nursery education. The nursery currently supports a small number of children with identified learning difficulties. The nursery employs 14 members of staff, including the provider. The majority of staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is suitably promoted. Staff implement mostly appropriate hygiene procedures along with suitable policies to prevent cross infection, for example, the use of a colour coded cloth system for cleaning. However, the storage of soiled nappies is problematic and combined with a lack of ventilation in the baby nappy changing area, this results in an unpleasant odour throughout the nursery. Children develop a good awareness of personal hygiene as more able children wash their hands after messy activities using a ramp, which facilitates their independence. Most records which contribute to the management of children's health, for example, accidents and medicines, are in place. However, following a recent change of recording procedures, some parental signatures have not been obtained prior to the administration of medicine and following accidents. This is a breach of regulations and compromises children's health.

Opportunities for children's physical development are in place, but are hindered by a lack of clear indoor and outdoor space, in which to provide access to large equipment. Children have limited access to fresh air and sunlight, which is necessary for their good health. Some interesting dance sessions are provided which children enjoy. These provide an opportunity for basic physical exercise, although, despite their enthusiasm, children cannot move around freely, which not only limits their physical movement but also their creative expression. Children are developing fine motor control when they use small tools such as scissors. This control further develops when they pour their own drinks using jugs at the snack table.

All children benefit from a healthy diet with fresh fruit and vegetables provided daily. Older children's meals are planned using the school meals service, whilst babies are provided with specialised snap-frozen meals, warmed on the premises for them. Some good arrangements are in place, which help children learn to respond to their own bodies, for example, children can independently access drinks when they are thirsty. Through the provision of soft furnishings, such as sofa's in some areas, some children can relax according to their own needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The environment is adequately planned to provide for the needs of most age groups, as children are cared for in individual areas, which are bright and attractively decorated. Suitable checking and maintenance procedures are implemented, which help staff identify and minimise any potential hazards. A good range of resources, particularly for pre-school aged children, are suitably organised to allow some free access to a range of play opportunities. However, space and storage in some areas is limited and at times this restricts children's movements. The organisation of space for babies, although meeting developmental needs, does not take into account the need for a quiet sleep area.

Children's safety is given high priority. Thorough security policies keep children safe, for example, when an unknown family member comes to collect them. Children's awareness of

emergency situations is heightened because staff practice evacuations drills with them. Children's welfare is adequately safeguarded. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and understand the procedures that they should follow in the event of concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Most children receive a suitable range of activities and play opportunities, to keep them stimulated and help them make progress in their learning. Some staff are beginning to use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well, to record children's progress and plan for their next steps. Most children receive some valuable first hand experiences which satisfy their exploratory impulses. For example, baking biscuits, moulding snowmen using mashed potato, and playing with Christmas decorations, which elsewhere they may not be encouraged to touch. Planned opportunities for babies, however, are less well developed and sometimes babies have limited toys and experiences to sustain their interest.

A basic key-working system is implemented, which helps staff focus on individual development needs. Occasionally however, babies become fractious because of the numbers of different part-time and cover staff attending to their care needs, for example, during nappy changes, feeds and sleep times.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a suitable understanding of how children learn through play and through appropriate questioning, which makes children think and remember. They have a basic understanding of the Foundation Stage and plan a sufficient range of themed activities on which to focus children's experiences. Detailed medium and long term plans are established, although staff do not fully understand how to implement them. This limits the impact that weekly planning might have on children's learning. Also, assessments of developmental progress are in place, but they are not regularly completed and are not used to plan for children's next steps, again because staff lack confidence in how to use them.

Children are confident in their relationships with each other and many have formed special friendships. They operate independently because in many areas this is promoted well. Children select their choice of floor jigsaw and put it away when finished. Children develop some creativity when they enjoy role play, with a good range of dressing up clothes to support their play. They have planted winter bulbs, they are talking about what they need in order to grow and they chart the weather conditions each day. This increases their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's interest in mark making is limited. They rarely use the planned area because some of the resources are unappealing. Children's use of number in everyday situations is also limited because again a lack of meaningful continuous provision hinders children's opportunities to reinforce their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are warmly welcomed into the nursery. Their individual needs are known and met because effective communication systems, such as daily diaries, are implemented, which helps both staff and parents share information on a daily basis. Children with identified learning difficulties are suitably supported, because staff work well with other agencies to share appropriate information, and to plan strategies to help children make progress.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Their behaviour is generally good. Staff use meaningful praise and reward systems, such as stickers, so that children understand wanted behaviour. Some effective organisation systems, such as the use of coloured bands to allow play in certain areas, helps children understand rules and helps manage children's play.

The partnerships with parents of children receiving funded nursery education is satisfactory. Sufficient information is provided for parents in documentation and displays, so that they know how the provision operates. Basic information is also provided in newsletters. However, children's progress is hindered because information about their learning and ways that parents can contribute to it, are not regularly shared.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides. Suitable recruitment practices ensures that staff are safe and several are experienced in their work with children. Sufficient training opportunities help staff update their skills, although the provider has taken limited steps to meet staff's training needs in relation to the Foundation Stage. In the main, leadership and management is satisfactory, as the management team have a generally good understanding of planning for children's learning. However, they do not always use their skills to guide less confident staff in order to enhance the provision. The provider uses appropriate sources of advice and support, to help guide future improvements.

Documentation is mostly satisfactory. A developing operational plan, clear registration procedures, children's details and parental permissions are all in place, which contributes to the safe and mostly effective management of the setting.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that improvements be made to systems for recording visitors and with regard to the making of hot drinks in children's areas. A guest book is now kept and signed by all visitors to the setting and because the nursery is now open all day, staff take their breaks and consequently hot drinks, away from children. Suitable attention to both of these issues has enhanced children's care.

The last nursery education inspection recommended that improvements be made to increase children's opportunities to recognise numbers, and to increase children's opportunities for

developing climbing skills and construction. Attention given to these issues has not been maintained. Children are provided with planned opportunities to play with toys which join and connect, in order to construct with a purpose. However, the other two issues remain a focus of the recommendations made as a result of this inspection.

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 complaint record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- improve the procedures for accident and medicine recording by ensuring that parents sign each entry and by obtaining written parental permission prior to the administration of all medication
- improve arrangements for the storage of soiled nappies, ensuring that they meet environmental health standards.
- develop the key-working system to limit the numbers of staff caring for individuals
- improve the provision for children under two years by; reviewing the organisation of their base area, ensuring that sufficient resources are provided and by developing staff's understanding of, for example, the 'Birth to three matters' framework to provide a wider range of experiences to promote developmental progress
- review the organisation of space to ensure that space standards are met, play areas are large enough to give scope for free movement and that there is adequate storage space for equipment

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):

- improve staff's knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, so that they can more effectively use their observations of children to assess and plan for their next steps in learning
- increase children's opportunities for physical development, so that they can more regularly access fresh air and sunlight and develop their skill in climbing and the use of large equipment
- increase children's practical opportunities to reinforce their learning through continuous provision, particularly in the areas of language and literacy and mathematics
- increase ways of providing parents with information about their child's progress and ways that they can contribute to it.

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